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Table of international exchange rates for various countries including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, etc.

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Ian Katz on the Hollywood fame machine

From nowhere to stardom

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As a Tory-led committee of MPs rejects a ban on hand guns, anger grows North of the border

'Telling Scotland to get stuffed'

"This report has been a waste of public money." Steve Birnie, father of Matthew, six, injured at Dunblane

"It is an insult to the children, the teacher who died and the people of Dunblane." Eileen Harild, teacher, badly hurt at Dunblane.

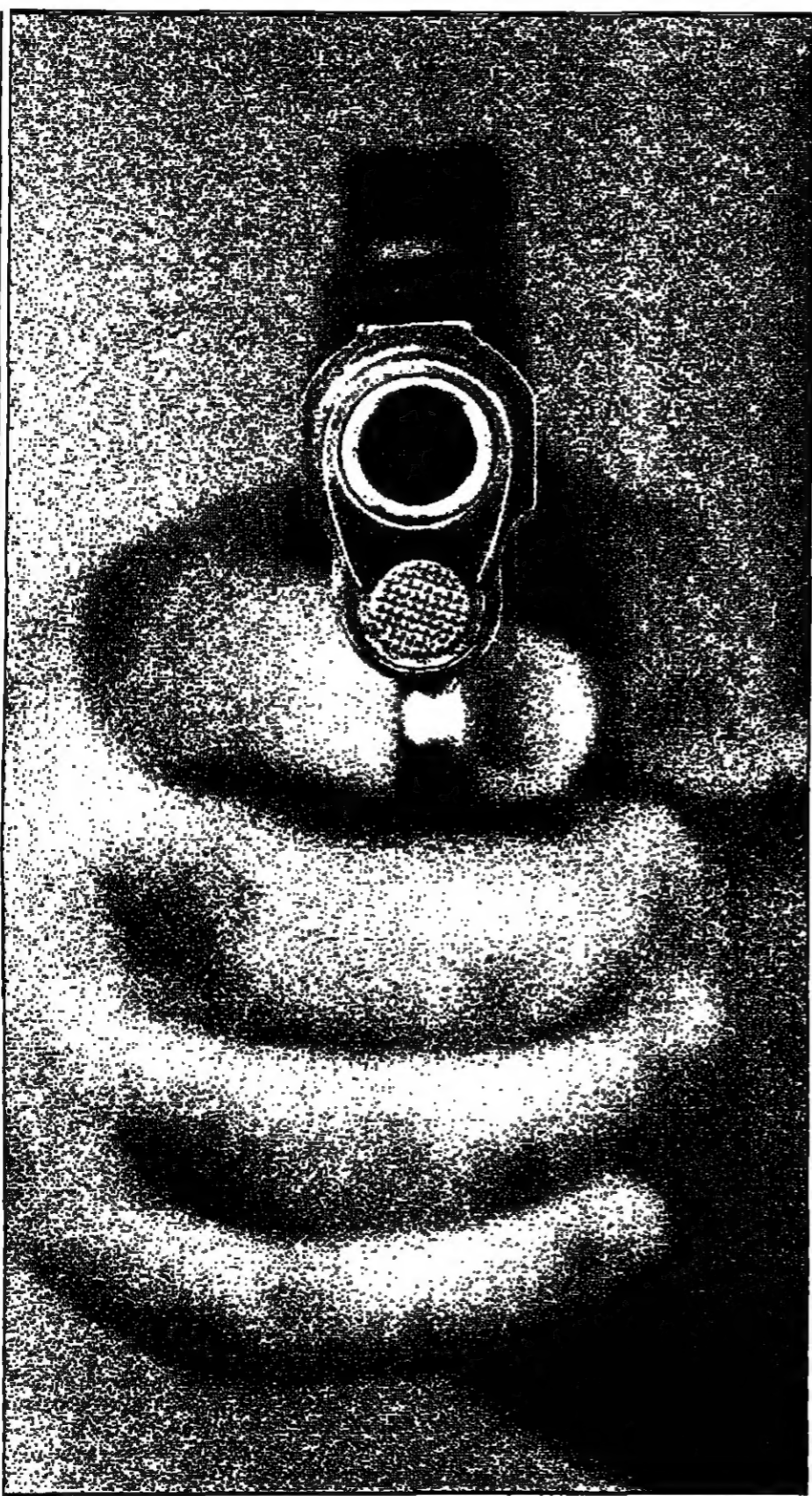
"The legitimate need to possess weapons over .22 calibre is something we question." James Sharples, ACPO chairman.

"There are some people holding firearms certificates that occasionally are going to go crazy and engage in mass killing." Fred Broughton, Police Federation chairman.

"I'm very upset at being characterised as some sort of mass murderer as some newspapers are trying to do." Walter Sweeney, Tory committee member

"They are talking out of the back of their heads." Sir Ivan Lawrence, committee chairman, on the critics.

"A commonsense judgment on behalf of the shooting community." Ian McConchie, general secretary of the National Pistol Association



All power grows... in Strathclyde a gun can be hired for £50

The Conservative rebuff to gun reform despite the Dunblane killings has touched a nerve in Scotland. Ed Vulliamy reports from Glasgow on a sense of national affront that is growing.

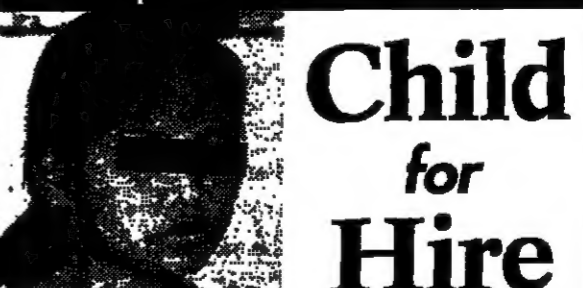
THIS is the land, they say here, of the gun hire business: £50 per day or night to hire a weapon. Sixty per cent of all Scottish crime involving firearms occurs in Strathclyde, and 85 per cent of all armed robberies in Scotland happen here. In the gun armistice that followed Dunblane, this area coughed up the biggest haul in Britain: more than 800 weapons, including a Kalashnikov and a Browning naval machine gun. Chief Constable Leslie Sharp talks about a "bottomless pit of firearms which criminals can hire, steal or borrow". Most people in the New Monaco bar come from two comfortable blocks up on nearby Gallowgate, where it is strange to find the slogan "ban handguns now" painted where one might normally expect "fuck the Pope" or "Celts rule". But rightly or wrongly there is a deeply held sentiment that, as James McIntyre puts it: "If those wee children were killed in Cambridge or Eton, then you bet they'd be worried about taking the flak from the parents. But it's just Scotland belly-aching again, so it's 'okay chaps, hold on'". Old Gordon Ross and his wife Rosalind are trying to decide in which bookmakers to spend the £3 they have earmarked for a flutter. "This place is full of bloody guns," says Gordon. "Any fool can get what he wants round here with a gun, I don't know if they're legal or illegal, and I don't care, we're sick of it." "I don't know who these people are down in London," says Rosalind, "but they're not wanted here no more if they won't do something to stop the shooting wee bastards. If that doesn't make a differ-

Summary table of recommendations from the law, committee majority, and labour minority regarding gun control.

ence, then nothing will." This is the frontier, where the city centre bustle gives way to a menacing terrain of low rise Lego-brick housing and industrial wasteland to let and where there were two shootings recently, gang-related, they say. But the slaughter of 16 children and their teacher from Primary One class at Dunblane school cut through even the hardest of skins in Scotland, slicing a raw nerve, and detonating a particular anger. The entrenchment of six Conservative MPs against a ban and yesterday's rebuff of gun control have cut through the debate over law and order and morality to make handguns a distinctly Scottish issue, in defiance of Westminster. Dr Mike North, whose daughter Sophie was murdered at Dunblane school, said gun control could become "the straw that breaks the camel's back" in Scotland. "Dunblane is in Scotland," says Alan Cathcart, putting down his pool cue in the New Monaco. "It's just up the road. And the fact remains that six Tory twerps from England told those poor mums and dads up there to get stuffed. You can say what you like - that's telling Scotland to get stuffed." Eve Petrie takes a break from the fruit machine to rest on the sticky seat in the stickler bar. "Nothing happened here as bad as what happened to the bairns up in that town," she spits. "But I tell you there's enough crazy folk around here as would do it if they had the chance." The Daily Record newspaper, which has both reflected and generated the national dimension to the anger, ran a headline saying "Traitors" after it broke the news of the defiance of the Dunblane families by the

Tory six. The Record's political editor, Tom Brown, says: "There is a Scottish element that is being ignored - the Dunblane families for a start, overridden, cut out. What people have tended to forget is the sense of community here. Everyone looked on them as 'our bairns'." Mr Brown foresees one immediate victim to the upcoming onslaught over gun control: the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth, whose constituency includes Dunblane. "He has come back, he is popular and has done well," says Mr Brown, "but now he may well have lost his seat over this issue." It is remarkable how quickly one leaves Glasgow behind, out of the New Monaco, over the hills and into the verdant valleys and bright rivers of Mr Forsyth's constituency of Stirling - a gathering of monuments to Scotland's defiance of London: Bannockburn, Jacobite hide-outs and now Dunblane. The election of a Conservative makes the sedate centre of Stirling the heart of that little which remains loyal to the Government in Scotland, a springboard for the recently past Glorious Twelfth, when men took their guns out into the hills for a different kind of shooting. The people who, Dr North said, "seem, incredibly, to have sided with the thugs" - The Barnton Bistro in Stirling couldn't be much further from the New Monaco back in Glasgow, but there is a strand that links the grime of the Monaco's preparations for Live Music Nite to the cool mist wrapping the Wallace Monument. "Dunblane has come to be a very Scottish tragedy, as well as everything else," says George Rocco, builders merchant from Bannockburn over cappuccino and tuna with lemon mayonnaise. "For us in this area it was a tragedy for the families and victims. But the sheer arrogance of the politicians has made it Scottish, and I wonder if that arrogance won't be the last straw for Scotland."

BBC Report On Child Prostitution



Monday's BBC News reports from Cambodia highlighted the horrific and growing problem of child prostitution. More than a million girls and boys are used for sex worldwide. A life of prostitution, fear and danger is a prospect faced by many children, some as young as 6. Save the Children is fighting this exploitation. You can help. Your donation will allow us to: Help children leave brothels and start a new life. Prevent children being tricked into working in the sex industry and offer poor children other means of survival. Work with international governments and the tourist industry to find better ways of protecting children.

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A-level success may bring shake-up

John Carvel Education Editor. MINISTERS are considering a manifesto pledge to change the examination board system after a further sharp improvement in the A level pass rate, due to be announced tomorrow. One option might be to amalgamate the four English boards to dispel fears of head teachers choosing boards likely to give the highest results. The proportion of passes at grade E or above is understood to have increased from 84.1 per cent in 1995 to almost 86 per cent this year. Although A level results have shown a consistent annual improvement, the rise this time is so far above average that some universities may be embarrassed by many students meeting the grade for a guaranteed place. There was concern last night

that at least one medical school could be seriously over-subscribed. The Government is planning a propaganda offensive tomorrow to counter allegations from the Tory right that the higher pass rate has been caused by a devaluation of the A level "gold standard". Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, has decided that duty ministers should pour scorn on the "moaning minnies" who refuse to take the better results at face value as a reflection of rising standards. "It is about time these doom and gloom merchants shut up and recognised the achievement of the candidates and of the parents and teachers who have supported them. This is the culmination of two years of hard work and we should be celebrating the better results, not whingeing," said one official. However, Mrs Shephard is understood to recognise that

the annual round of criticism about falling exam standards is unlikely to be quelled. Once the results season has passed, she is expected to resume active consideration of proposals to change the examination boards to remove suspicion that they might have a vested interest in lowering standards to increase the pass rate. There are four exam boards setting and marking A level papers in England. Although the system is monitored closely by the Government's curriculum advisers, it has been hard to dispel the suspicion that head teachers may be tempted to choose the board which offers the best prospect of the highest pass grades. Options to be considered by ministers are likely to include amalgamation of the English boards to eliminate the possibility of competitive devaluation of standards. There is only one board run-

ning the equivalent exam system in Scotland. George Turnbull, a spokesman for the Southern Examining Group, said it was hard to imagine how a government committed to increasing choice could justify "nationalising" the boards. An alternative reform would give the School Curriculum Assessment Authority a statutory power to control the A level syllabus and give directions to the boards over exams, similar to its existing powers over GCSE. This was envisaged in the 1988 Education Act, but never implemented because of drafting errors which would have given the Government power to interfere with professional qualifications in fields such as banking. Proposals would not be introduced in this Parliament and are expected to form part of a manifesto commitment to reform academic and vocational qualifications for candidates aged 16 to 19.

'Violent' man sought after vicar is stabbed to death in churchyard

David Ward. DETECTIVES on Merseyside last night named a "very violent" man they want to question after a vicar was stabbed to death in his churchyard. The Rev Christopher Gray, in charge of the Liverpool inner-city parish of St Margaret's, Anfield, was found early yesterday by neighbours as he lay dying outside his vicarage. Mr Gray, aged 32, was ordained four years ago by the Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt Rev David Sheppard, who later appointed him the diocese's evangelism officer. Dr Sheppard yesterday described him as one of the most able priests of his generation and said he would probably have become a bishop. Police said the attacker later forced his way into a neighbouring house, held a woman at knifepoint, and

stole her car to make his escape. Police said they were hunting Terence Pappas Storey, aged 31, whom Mr Gray had been advising following his release from Liverpool's Walton prison last December. Detective Chief Inspector Elmore Davies, who is leading the murder inquiry, said he was naming Storey because of the ferocity of the attack. He described it as a "completely unprovoked attack on a well-respected, God-fearing man, well known in the community". He said Storey had addresses in Speke, Liverpool, and Wallasey, Wirral, and it was likely that he would approach friends and ask them to hide him or provide him with money. "He is a man whom we know well and he has a very violent past. We need to speak to him and also to warn the turn to page 3, column 1

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Save the Children logo and contact information.

Sketch

Mr Bean sweetens Republican hopes



Peter Preston

WOULD you like a jelly-bean? Every time I pass the Ronald Reagan Library stand in the convention emporium, a nice lady gives me another packet. And I keep passing the stand, because it is fascinating.

There is every autobiography (his and hers) on sale. There are pictures of Ronnie with Gorbachev and King Hussein and, right at the back, Margaret Thatcher. But the videos draw the crowd. The old wizard telling his Irish jokes, or his golfer and anthill jokes, or his priest who got into bed with the wrong woman joke. And the Republican delegates clustered round the screen, hour after hour, laugh along, moist-eyed.

A few years ago, I was wandering through the Army and Navy store in Victoria. Shuffling by the shirt counter went an elderly couple: she holding his arm, he slow and tottery and staring. Nobody helped them. Nobody opened doors. Nobody paid a moment's court, or even notice. Exit Harold Wilson, four times prime minister of Great Britain, and his Mary of better or worse.

America may be a rougher, tougher society; but they sure treat their retired politicians well. When you win an election, you keep it for ever. Once a governor always a governor. When you lose or fade, a sweet cloud of cloying benediction drops on your head.

At the Richard Nixon Library stand, there are no videos, but you can get your photograph taken between cardboard cut-outs of Nixon and Elvis at their "world famous meeting".

Would the Tories allow a Neville Chamberlain ("Smile over Adolf's shoulder and wave that famous letter on a timeless photo of your own") or Anthony Eden stand within a hundred miles of Bourne-mouth, Brighton or Blackpool? Do they, indeed, want to

see any of their erstwhile best-beloved ever again? Gerald Ford not only looks like Jack Benny, but sounds like him. "We don't have a Ford or a Lincoln in the White House today. What we have is a convertible Dodge." George Bush flaps and whines, but they roar when he introduces "the most popular woman in America." Enter Barbara Bush, dressed like the Queen Mum and walking like John Wayne.

They're not very tactful in the Bush family: George senior handles his wife like a fragile chamber pot, and when George junior introduces his wife, Laura, they shake hands. But Ronnie is the big one. He was, they keep saying, the American Dream. He ran the Republican's Camelot saloon. He is, when you read the script of "honesty" and "integrity", their Back to the Future. He has tragically forgotten them, but they will not forget him.

Jack Kemp, on soft-centre video, calls Reagan "the last lion of the twentieth century". Billy Graham calls him "a national grandfather". We're invited to weep a little as he and Nancy amble away into the sunset. And Nancy arrives in person, with more tears, to tell us he is still the eternal optimist. "He still sees that shining city on the hill".

Ronald Reagan is different. He is Californian gold. But deference and the appearance of love follow all of them. The goofy ones, the crooked ones, the ones who had trouble thinking and chewing gum at the same time. They become monuments.

The real difficulty here, perhaps, is making sure Bob Dole doesn't turn Memorial Library before he is elected. Bush looks sprancier. Ford looks quite as awake.

"My name", says an unrecognisable voice from the podium, "is Sam Brownback. I'm a farm boy from Parker, Kansas, and I'm running for Bob Dole's seat in the US Senate. These are mighty big shoes to fill. They're size 25 shoes even Michael Jordan couldn't fill."

Apparently "Kansas, like Dwight Eisenhower and Bob Dole, embody the spirit of Kansas." Now that would be a ticket.

Powell helps moderates win the day, page 6



A fireman examines the wreckage of the Spanish jet which collided with a van on the A40(M) next to Northolt airfield after crashing through the perimeter fence. PHOTOGRAPH DAN GILMAN

Miracle escapes as plane skids on to motorway

ALEX BELLOS

AN EXECUTIVE jet landing at RAF Northolt yesterday morning overshoot the runway and finished up on a motorway, colliding with a transit van. Fire brigade officers said it was remarkable that the van driver and the three people on

the plane all escaped serious injury. The plane broke in half on impact, scattering wreckage all over the A40(M) in north-west London. The Learjet, which had arrived from Palma in Majorca, was carrying actress Lisa Hogan and two Spanish pilots. Miss Hogan, aged 35, was flying to Pinewood studios for work on John Clee's Pierce

Creatures, sequel to A Fish Called Wanda. Miss Hogan, a former model and researcher for Clee's company Fish Productions, plays the assistant to a sea-lion keeper played by Ronnie Corbett in the film which stars Kevin Kline, Jamie Lee Curtis and Michael Palin.

Gary Jewel, aged 33, was on his duties as an upholstery salesman when his Ford Transit was in collision with the plane at an estimated 50 mph. Fire officers took 45 minutes to cut him out of the wreckage.

Mr Jewel, a father of two from Reading, suffered only cuts and bruises. He was taken to hospital in Ealing but was released last night. Miss Hogan and the captain

were discharged from Hillingdon hospital with similar minor injuries. The co-pilot broke his nose in the crash and has a suspected fractured skull. Officers of the Air Accidents Investigation Branch arrived at the RAF base, which is often used by politicians, to start an inquiry into the crash.

Dr Mike Browning, a paramedic, said: "The plane was like paper - it had just folded and was completely crushed. The two pilots were trapped in the cockpit but were okay and we managed to free them fairly quickly. The woman passenger had already climbed out of the window and was on the road by the time we got there."

French raid hardens hunger strikers

On the 40th day of their fast, the Africans of St Bernard's Church are 'ready to die' for residence permits, as wider support grows

ALEX DUVAL SMITH in Paris

HAMADY KAMARA, aged 34, had not intended to die in France. He arrived six years ago on a renewable visa and planned to work, save, and eventually return to Mauritania. Yesterday, the prospect of dying in France became more real, as he and nine others marked the 40th day of a hunger strike.

The 10 men, who with more than 100 other people are occupying Saint Bernard's Church in northern Paris, say they have nothing to lose. "Sleeping here, reading newspapers and drinking sweet tea, is a lot better than being sent back to Africa," said Mr

Kamara, lying in a corn-bush sleeping bag alongside the other hunger strikers. "The Africans of Saint Bernard, as they have become known, want the government to give them 10-year residence permits. Each arrived up to 10 years ago and routinely renewed his residence permit. They worked, paid social security contributions and tax. Many got married and had children. Then the law changed in 1994 and they were classed as illegal immigrants.

Between calls on his mobile phone, Diop Boubacar was trying to make the tea. An unemployed Senegalese computer technician, aged 29, he is not on hunger strike but in charge of logistics at the neo-Gothic church.

"A few days ago, you could easily make enough tea for everyone. Now there are so many people here that we need a huge saucepan to boil the water," said Mr Boubacar, who is married to a Senegalese woman and has a daughter, aged two, who was born in France.

Under the 1994 law, he and his wife may be expelled under their daughter, who will not be entitled to French nationality until she is aged 16. But Mr Boubacar, who has been in France for eight years, is confident the authorities will not touch him while he is at Saint Bernard.



Police watch as immigrants protest in solidarity outside Notre-Dame Cathedral yesterday

Arm of the law wrongfoots warden

VIVEK CHAUDHARY

THE traffic warden was only doing his job. There again, the policeman was only doing what every motorist has thought of at one time or another.

An official complaint has been made to the Metropolitan Police after a traffic warden was handcuffed and frog-marched to a police station for attempting to issue a parking ticket to a van parked near Buckingham Palace.

The warden, who is not being named and is on sick leave, was told by a policeman to ignore the vehicle, which was parked on double yellow lines. When he insisted on issuing the ticket, he was promptly arrested for obstructing police.

The incident took place at Buckingham Gate, which runs alongside the palace. A spokesman for Westminster city council said: "The man was distressed and visibly shaken. He had been trying to issue a ticket to a van which was illegally parked on double yellow lines where unloading is not allowed in an area where police have asked us to be vigilant about this sort of thing."

"He did not offer any resistance but the handcuffs were not removed. The warden was just carrying out his normal enforcement duties. The council is dismayed and believes the policeman's action was extreme."

A spokesman for Scotland Yard said that the warden was given a formal warning and released without further action. But his valiant attempt to do his duty pales into insignificance when compared with the zeal of some other traffic wardens.

Review

Pilgrims savour 3 journeys in 1

Andrew Clements

Stravinsky Day The Proms, Albert Hall

IT WAS the first time in the Proms that three concertos in a single day had been devoted to a single composer, and the 25th anniversary of the death of Igor Stravinsky this year provided the perfect excuse for such a tribute.

By the time the final concert ended around 11pm, with Andrew Parrott conducting the Taverner Choir and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in a rapt and contained account of the 1948 Mass - there was the real sense of a pilgrimage completed.

But it had all begun rather uncertainly seven hours earlier with a semi-staging (movement, costumes but no scenery) of 'The Soldier's Tale'. With narrator, dancers and instrumentalists spread around the arena, and the promenaders exiled to what is usually the concert platform, it should have launched the celebration in a lively and colourful way. But the fatness of the production - over-choreographed by Oliver Hindle with members of Birmingham Royal Ballet - and the tepid and under-characterised account of the score from the group under Daniel Harding drained most of the earthy vigour.

The Soldier's Tale was the best known work in the day, which otherwise steered clear of standard-repertoire Stravinsky. Oliver Knussen's superbly prepared programme with the BBC Symphony Orchestra juxtaposed modern and late works, and generated the

sense of discovery the occasion needed. In the complete score of The Fairy's Kiss, Stravinsky's profound and sometimes disconcertingly romantic 1928 evocation of Tchaikovsky, Knussen showed that the ballet can work on its own terms, and that the shifts in style - warm, luxurious melodies culled from Tchaikovsky songs often driven to climaxes in uncompromising neoclassical fashion - can be convincingly reconciled.

Another Stravinsky homage, his 1960 Monumentum Pro Gesualdo, preceded by the three Gesualdo motets that he transcribed, sung by the New London Chamber Choir, was followed by a score that has become a bit of a Knussen party-piece, The Flood. Of all the late serial works, it is the most extrovert and engaging - a retelling of the Creation composed for American television and crammed, from Adam to Noah and his animals, into 20 minutes. The teeming detail and the precision of every gesture were brilliantly caught by the BBCSO; Michael Berkeley was the narrator, the tenor Robert Tear sang Lucifer, and David Wilson-Johnson and Stephen Richardson, in rhythmic unison, were the voice of God.

In the final concert, the Concerto for Piano and Wind - with Wayne Marshall as the flashy but rather uneven soloist - was sandwiched between the Cantata on English Texts and the Mass. If it made for a rather restrained and downbeat end to the day, Parrott's performances always pointed up the beauty of Stravinsky's choral writing. This review appeared in later editions yesterday.

Green Derek Malcolm reviews the latest film releases

every Thursday in The Guardian

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مكتبة الجليل

New offer fuels row on abortion

Sarah Boseley and Chris Millill

THE anti-abortion charity Life reopened the debate on the cash value of multiple pregnancies yesterday when it acknowledged it was considering funding a £15,000 house extension for an Oxfordshire couple who were threatening to abort twins.

Professor Jack Scarisbrick of Life said they had been approached by more than one family seeking financial help in the wake of the recent publicity over the single woman who had one twin aborted in Queen Charlotte's Hospital, west London, because she could not afford to bring up both babies.

Ms Allwood caused an outcry when it emerged that she stands to gain over £100,000 for each of the octuplets that is born. The latest stories are likely to raise the temperature of debate still further.

there is if we win the lottery and extend our house."

Prof Scarisbrick said Life was in negotiation with the couple through an intermediary. "We are saying, give us 72 hours to try to make a real difference to you."

A second family, expecting triplets, had also contacted Life looking for financial help. Prof Scarisbrick admitted the organisation could be opening the floodgates.

"Yes — it is obviously open to abuse," he said. "We have gone to considerable pains to make sure that the kind of help they are asking for is matched by their own efforts. In both cases they are going to sell a car."

The Oxfordshire mother said her husband worked full-time while she worked part-time to pay off the loan on the car. "I don't think my husband will cope with the pressure of more kids. I think he'll leave." She could not cope with the idea of adoption.

Paul Tully of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) said that it had received more calls for help from families than usual. Some had hoped for money.

SPUC was offered £25,000 in donations for the mother whose twins were aborted — before it came to light that the operation had taken place.

In spite of calls for tighter controls over the sort of fertility drugs taken by Ms Allwood, Mr Dorrell said yesterday that it was not possible to bring in sufficiently detailed laws to cover every aspect of the range of treatment available.

All doctors were bound by the ethical standards laid down by the General Medical Council, he said.

It would be both wrong and impractical to vet couples seeking treatment.

Letters, page 14; Parents, G2 page 4

From the traditions of a great Frenchman . . . to the wild visions of the woman from Derby



The classic Dior gown, left, and a Westwood creation. Given to extreme designs, Westwood yet reveals a romantic vision of femininity

PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRIS MOORE

Vicar stabbed in churchyard

continued from page 1

community that we are in no doubt that he will offer violence again if necessary. He is on the run and will require other people to give him shelter and assistance."

Mr Davies said Storey had a "very bad record" of offences involving robbery, weapons, drugs and violence, and he should not be approached by members of the public.

He said that Mr Gray had returned home to his vicarage in Tuebrook, Liverpool, at midnight. At about 12.40am yesterday, witnesses heard him speaking to another man whose voice became raised. They heard a voice cry out: "Witnesses saw a man run from the scene outside the

church near the vicarage," said Mr Davies. "They found Mr Gray dying outside his home."

He said the attacker had fled, forced his way into a nearby house, threatened a woman with a knife and attempted to abduct her.

The woman, desperately protesting herself and her two young children, fought him off. The man took her keys and drove off in her Ford Escort.

Dr Sheppard said that Mr Gray had devoted his life to serving others and that risk was part of the job. "All clergy have people who come to their door and it is part of our tradition that we do not turn them away without trying to help them in any way we can."

Mr Gray left Oxford with a double first in history and was a gifted linguist and writer. He served in two Liverpool parishes before being appointed vicar of St Margaret's 18 months ago.

Dr Sheppard said Mr Gray's death was "a terrible blow to his family, the parish and the wider church. The death of this much valued priest is a tremendous loss to me personally, and to all of us in the diocese. One of the ablest priests of his generation, Christopher Gray had very special gifts of scholarship."

With his intellectual brilliance, Mr Gray had had the potential to become a bishop, he added. But he had determined to stay in an urban parish.



Christopher Gray . . . among most able of his generation

Queen of Punk Westwood 'bound for Christian Dior'

Susannah Frankel on a fashion rebel tipped to assume a top fashion crown and promote Britain's rising status in the field

THE fashion world is buzzing with rumours that Vivienne Westwood — Queen of Punk, grande dame of British fashion and the woman most famous for parading knickerless around Buckingham Palace — looks set to take over at Christian Dior, France's oldest couture house.

Since Gianfranco Ferré announced his departure in July, speculation has been rife over who will inherit the Dior crown, with everyone from Jean Paul Gaultier to Christian Lacroix and John Galiano being touted as hot favourites.

A recent report in the US style bible *Womenswear Daily*, however, suggests that Westwood is Ferré's most likely successor, with further reports suggesting

she has, in fact, already been appointed. Nothing will be announced until Ferré retires in October.

The move would be another great step forward for British fashion, still glorying in the aftermath of John Galiano's triumphant takeover at Givenchy last autumn — a move which has been credited with bringing the industry back into the limelight.

But sceptics are wary that Westwood's talents would be more difficult to harness than Galiano's — the extremity of her designs and her passion for hugely elaborate leg o' mutton sleeves and platformed shoes so high that Naomi Campbell fell flat on her face are legendary.

Born in Derbyshire in 1941, it was not until the

seventies that Westwood began work as a designer, setting up the rubber-filled shop later to be called Sex with her then husband, punk entrepreneur Malcolm McLaren. By 1976 Sex had become London's punk HQ with Westwood, the woman responsible for putting the safety-pin through the Queen's nose on the cover of the Sex Pistols' *God Save the Queen*, at its helm.

Westwood's first catwalk collection, *Pirates*, followed in 1981 in London's Olympia, where she continued to show until, in 1983, she became the first British designer since Mary Quant to be invited to show in Paris.

It was not until the early nineties, however, that Westwood's talents were fully recognised in this country, when she was awarded British Designer of the Year two years running. In 1992 she received an OBE from the Queen and, never aware to more than her fair share of con-

troversy, left Buckingham Palace twirling her skirts provocatively to reveal she wasn't wearing any underwear.

Westwood, who lives in a council flat in south London with her husband Andreas Kronthaler, 25 years her junior, may seem an unlikely candidate to take over from Ferré. However, her love of historical context, her belief in fashion as one of the great art forms and her at times almost archaically romantic vision of femininity may make her just the woman for the job.

He intended to study architecture but switched to political science and then opened an art gallery in 1926.

He and his family were ruined in the Depression and he turned to illustration, selling fashion sketches to Robert Piguet, who then asked him

to make several dresses. The House of Dior, which he opened in post-war Paris, was a phenomenal success, as the New Look was received with critical acclaim by a Europe ready for dramatic change. He remained at the helm until his death in 1987, aged 82.

He intended to study architecture but switched to political science and then opened an art gallery in 1926.

He and his family were ruined in the Depression and he turned to illustration, selling fashion sketches to Robert Piguet, who then asked him



Vivienne Westwood: Possible successor



Gianfranco Ferré: Retiring in October

Man who gave post-war Europe the New Look

CHRISTIAN Dior, who made his greatest contribution to fashion with the New Look in 1947, gently rounded shoulders, prominent bust, tiny nipped-in waist and huge sweeping skirts, came to design almost by default, writes *Romaine Lillie*.

He intended to study architecture but switched to political science and then opened an art gallery in 1926.

He and his family were ruined in the Depression and he turned to illustration, selling fashion sketches to Robert Piguet, who then asked him

Electricity prices to fall as National Grid told to give consumers savings worth £1.2bn

Chris Barrie Business Correspondent

ELECTRICITY consumers are set to save up to £5 a year on power bills following the announcement yesterday that price controls on the National Grid are to be dramatically tightened by watchdog Stephen Littlechild.

In a decision that stunned the City with its severity and dismayed unions fearful of hefty job cuts, Prof Littlechild said he planned to force the Grid — which runs the nation's power lines — to hand consumers savings worth up to £1.2 billion over the next four years.

The Grid reacted angrily and hinted that investment in the infrastructure of transmission wires and pylons

could suffer. Having come close to ordering blackouts on several occasions in recent months, Grid executives indicated that spending and staffing levels were critical issues.

Dismissing Prof Littlechild's calculations as "extremely perverse", Roger Urwin, managing director of the Grid's transmission arm, warned that response times to emergencies and customer

services suffered when staffing levels were cut.

The announcement is the latest in a series of clashes between regulators and the privatised utilities. It triggered a fall in the Grid share price amid suggestions that hundreds of jobs might have to go to finance the savings.

Sol Mead, deputy head of energy at the trade union Unison, said staffing levels had

already been cut by over 11 per cent last year, and a further 500 were poised to go.

For a domestic customer with a bill of about £300, Professor Littlechild's price limits on the Grid's core transmission business will cut bills in real terms by 1.5 per cent, or between £4 and £5 a year.

Transmission accounts for about 7 per cent of a customer's bill. The watchdog forecast savings of "thousands of pounds" for industrial customers.

The proposals, which have yet to be finally confirmed, require the Grid to cut prices by up to 25 per cent next April, followed by a cap on prices equivalent to the rate of inflation less 4 per cent.

Electrical storms, and Notebook, page 11

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News in brief

Collectors fined for illegal birds' eggs

THREE men were fined a total of £7,600 yesterday for illegally possessing birds' eggs after a nationwide police and RSPB operation. Magistrates at Salisbury, Wiltshire, fined Geoffrey Peirson, aged 48, £5,000 with £30 costs, while Anthony Parkes, also 48, and Michael Sloane, aged 36, were fined £1,900 and £1,000 respectively. Their arrests followed Operation Avocet, aimed at collectors and traders in eggs, protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The court had heard that when police raided Parkes's home last September, they seized more than 10,000 birds' eggs — one of the largest seizures in this country. Parkes admitted 52 specimen charges, Sloane admitted offences concerning 1,144 eggs and Peirson admitted seven offences. The chairman of the bench, Trevor Gilbert, said they considered fines of "many, many thousands of pounds" for Parkes and Sloane, but the men had financial difficulties. It has been illegal since 1954 to collect wild birds' eggs. Since the 1981 Act — which can impose fines up to £5,000 per egg — possession is illegal. — Stuart Miller

Dead woman 'tricked into car'

DETECTIVES yesterday revealed that a woman whose naked body was found behind a rubbish bin in Manchester was a graduate who had returned to the city to see student friends. The woman, aged 25 and not so far named, had toured a number of bars but split up with her companions. She may have been tricked into getting into a car, believing it was a taxi. Her body was found at a pub in the Ardwick area on Sunday. It is believed she was sexually assaulted and then beaten with an axe or similar weapon. Her attacker had set fire to her body to try to prevent her being identified. — David Ward

Police pay refugee £13,000

A KURDISH refugee and trade union branch secretary who fled Turkey to avoid police persecution was yesterday awarded £13,500 in damages and legal costs against the Metropolitan Police for assault, false imprisonment and malicious prosecution. Tekin Kartal, aged 28 and a TGWU official, had been arrested after a strike outside a textile factory in Stoke Newington, north London, in 1990. He was charged with violent disorder and assaulting a police officer but acquitted. After yesterday's hearing at Central London county court Mr Kartal said: "More must be done to stop continuing police malpractice which is directed against the refugee community." The Metropolitan Police had not accepted liability. — Owen Soisoc

Plaid Cymru in cash crisis

PLAID Cymru is facing a cash crisis as it prepares for a general election in which the party desperately wants to increase its tally of just four MPs. "If we don't get the money we need, we will fight the election with our hands tied behind our backs," said Dafydd Wigley, Plaid Cymru's president. Officials say £100,000 is needed to fight the election with confidence, plus a further £35,000 to cover a budget deficit which has fallen to win its bankers' support. "We have to face ever-increasing election costs but, unlike the Labour Party, we don't have the trade unions giving us megabucks," said Mr Wigley. "And we don't get money from big businesses as the Tories do." The party is not considering emulating the Conservatives and offering dinner dates with the president in return for £10,000 cheques. "I don't think people in Wales would pay that much to have lunch with me," Mr Wigley said. — David Ward

Thumping fine for teenager

A TEENAGE motorist was fined £350 pounds plus £140 costs yesterday for driving around Eastbourne with thumping pop music blaring from the back of his car. Gary Smith was stopped in April, and police found the entire back seat of his car was occupied by a giant speaker. The fine — the first of its kind in Britain — was met with a chorus of approval by residents.



French students Vincent Rabier and Aude Bertrando admire Canova's Ideal Head, saved for the nation by a lottery grant and now in the Ashmolean, Oxford. PHOTOGRAPH: RUSSELL BACH

Grant saves marble treasure

James Meikle HIS Three Graces cost £7.6 million, his lost Cupid failed to make £1 million, and now his marble bust has been saved for the nation at £746,000. The Ideal Head of a woman by the neo-classical sculptor Antonio Canova will make its debut at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, today thanks to a £560,000 lottery grant and a

public appeal. The bust, a gift from Canova for help in retrieving Italian art treasures from France after the Napoleonic wars, had remained with the family to whom it was given until last year when it was sold at auction to a dealer for just under £400,000. The head was bound for a foreign museum, but its export was deferred to give an Anglo-Italian friendship. The museum's trust fund provided £50,000, the National Arts Collection Board a similar amount and one benefactor provided more than £50,000. A Canova cupid statue

found in a West Country garden failed to reach its reserve price at an auction last month. It was expected to fetch £1 million. The Three Graces went for rather more after a campaign to match the price paid by the Californian Getty Museum in 1989. The grant was among 47 totalling nearly £10 million announced yesterday by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Other beneficiaries included the National Banner

Initiative, a group of 14 institutions researching and preserving trade union and political banners, which received £28,300; the Theatre Museum in London, £28,000; and the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, Hampshire, £250,000. The biggest single grant announced was £1.8 million for an exhibition hall for the Scottish United Services Museum at Edinburgh Castle.

Royal Mail to woo post strike waverers

Seumas Milne Labour Editor POST Office managers have geared up for a strike-breaking effort to crack support for today's fifth national 24-hour walkout by delivery and sorting office workers, according to confidential Royal Mail

memorandums passed to the Guardian. Managers have been told to "try everything we can" — including singling out "opinion formers", arranging time off for "positive" workplace meetings and orchestrating local ballots and petitions — to organise teams of "waverers" to cross picket lines. Postal workers in the

South-east are being offered the chance to change their work patterns today in order to "work without strike-breaking" by beginning their shifts shortly before the 3am deadline set by the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) for the start of the strike. The documents show Post Office management is staking its position on a large-scale return to work, rather than a resumption of negotiation on the hours, pay and working practices deal rejected by the CWU executive. Last night, the Post Office announced nearly four out of five postal workers who had answered a management

questionnaire wanted a new ballot. But Alan Johnson, CWU general secretary, accused Royal Mail of "machinations" to create a "charade" of collapsing support for industrial action. "Our members will not be bullied, tricked or coerced into submission. The strike can only end if Royal Mail agree to negotiate with us again. The internal Post Office documents confirm managers recognise the problems in undermining support for the stoppages. In a private memo sent to all delivery office managers in South Wales and the South-west last week, Ronnie

Henderson, divisional personnel director, wrote the likelihood of significant strike-breaking at large sorting offices was "remote: the strength of the picket lines and the fear of recrimination and intimidation are strong disincentives." Warning "there are some very difficult decisions to be taken", Mr Henderson said managers must "try everything we can to persuade and facilitate attendance at work" on 14 August. They should use all their "skill and ingenuity" to "group together those who are wavering so that they can attend together at particular units and rely

on each other for team solidarity". Mr Henderson suggested a four-point plan at each workplace for organising opposition to the strikes. He said it had already proved successful in some offices but warned managers must ensure meetings would be "positive about coming into work and not negative about consolidating the strike". The key issues in dispute are Royal Mail's demand for flexible "teamworking" and to concentrate mail on the first delivery — which the CWU believes will threaten the second delivery and full-time jobs.

No one to blame for rail deaths crash, says report

Rebecca Smithers Political Correspondent LABOUR last night called for Railtrack to be stripped of its safety responsibilities, after the privatised track authority concluded in an internal report that no one is to blame for a fatal train crash at Stafford in March. Two people died and 22 were injured after a derailed freight train was struck head on by a Royal Mail train. Both trains belonged to privatised operators bought by the US railroad company Wisconsin Central. The internal report — leaked yesterday to Labour — was carried out for Railtrack's Midlands zone and the operators by a private rail safety consultant. It has concluded that none of the parties involved was to blame for the accident at Rickercote, near Stafford. The accident was caused by a broken axle on one of the

freight wagons, it says. Railtrack's London HQ would only say last night that it was waiting "for the results of the Health and Safety Executive's detailed investigation". Labour's transport spokeswoman, Glenda Jackson, said last night: "It is quite amazing that Railtrack has concluded that no one is to be held responsible for such a serious accident. There have always been fears that following privatisation operators would seek to avoid blame for individual incidents and this report has fully justified those concerns. We are again calling for the removal of Railtrack's responsibility for investigating all serious safety issues and for that responsibility to be placed in the hands of a fully independent safety executive." Railtrack has also delayed its initial conclusions about the cause of last Thursday's rail collision near Watford Junction until next month. A woman was killed and 75

people injured after a full passenger train smashed into an empty train crossing over the same stretch of the West Coast main line. The rail passenger watchdog yesterday ordered significant changes in rail penalty fares procedures after complaints from passengers that some on-the-spot fines for travelling without tickets have been unfair and draconian. The rail regulator, John Swift, said that Parliament was rightly concerned that the innocent passenger should be given every protection against being charged improperly. He added that changes should ensure that there were adequate back-up facilities to buy tickets when the station ticket office was closed, passengers are told where and when the schemes operate, platform tickets were made available, and there were improvements in standards of training of penalty fare staff, known as revenue protection inspectors.

Former pilot derides MoD version of dummy bomb

Seumas Milne MINISTRY of Defence claims that RAF records of a serious accident involving a British nuclear weapon at Wittering air base in the late 1950s actually referred to a non-nuclear dummy bomb were yesterday described as "incredible" by a senior retired RAF officer. According to a newly-revealed RAF Wittering operations record book, a 200lb atom bomb was accidentally jettisoned from a Valiant bomber in May 1959, causing "severe damage" to the nuclear weapon. The MoD, which has insisted for 40 years there has never been a nuclear weapons accident in Britain, said earlier this week the Wittering incident must have involved an "inert training round" as it occurred during a training flight. The ministry was, however, unable to explain why the squadron commander had reported a nuclear accident in the log. But Air Commodore Alistair Mackie, who is understood to have flown nuclear-armed Vulcan bombers in the 1950s and 1960s, said yesterday: "It seems astonishing to the point of incredulity that if it were a training weapon no reference would be made to that in the ops record book." Air Commodore Mackie, who is now a prominent supporter of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, said it would have been "absolutely extraordinary" for anyone to report a nuclear weapons accident if it in fact involved a dummy. "If it had been a dummy, the CO would have made some reference to it. The implication is strongly it was not a dummy." Veterans of the "V-force" generation of nuclear bombers in the 1950s and 1960s — which included the Valiant — have said they flew with live weapons so the Government could declare Britain's nuclear deterrent to be ready.

Britons to appeal against drugs conviction

Two girls sentenced to five years' imprisonment after being caught with 11lb of cannabis at Casablanca airport are to appeal against their convictions. Sally Griffiths, who is 18 today, and Claire Martin, aged 19, of Colchester, Essex, were found guilty by a Moroccan court on Monday of possessing and trading in drugs. They were accused of buying the drugs in Fez, intending to sell them to a British dealer in Amsterdam for £1,500. Both denied the charges, claiming that they were not aware they had drugs in their luggage. A spokesman for the Foreign Office, whose officials

have been in regular contact with the girls, said: "They are planning to appeal within the next 15 days, the maximum period within which they can appeal under Moroccan law." They had not complained about the conditions they were being kept in and were "as well as can be expected in the circumstances". Miss Griffiths's mother, Angela, said: "We will do everything we can to get her back." Commenting on the sentence, she said her daughter was strong-willed, but "you can never be prepared for it. I can imagine what she is feeling. We shall be worrying as to how she will cope." Miss Martin's father, Christopher, a community liaison policeman, and his wife, Susan, are in Morocco.

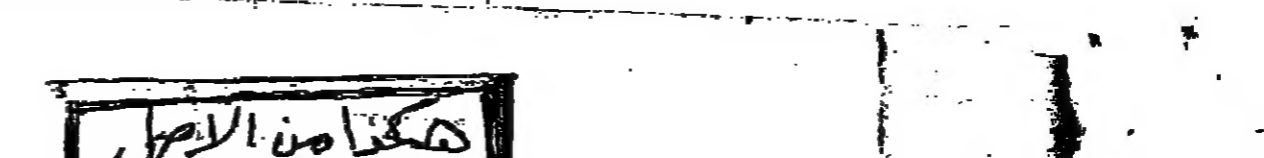
Stephen Jakobi, spokesman for Fair Trials Abroad, yesterday expressed concern at the sentences and the way the trial was conducted. "They should have been tried in a youth court, and their ages should have been taken into consideration," he said. "I don't understand how you can hold a fair trial within two weeks of the girls' being arrested." However, they could have faced longer terms had they been arrested and found guilty in Britain. Sentences for importing both soft and hard drugs have been increasing. Women's welfare groups have expressed concern at the many foreign women in British jails. Many were poor and were duped into carrying drugs, or blackmailed.

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5% APR DISCOUNT	7% APR DISCOUNT
£5,001 - £10,000 14.9% APR	£10,001 - £15,000 12.9% APR

LENDER	AMOUNTS FROM £100 TO £10,000	INTEREST RATE	APR
Bank of Scotland	£240	£12,000	19.6%
Lombard Bank	£180	£12,000	17.0%
First Trust Bank (NI)	£120	£12,000	14.4%
Royal Bank of Scotland	£35	£12,000	14.7%
Clydesdale Bank	£35	£12,000	14.3%
MBNA	Nil	£11,000	12.9%



Government fails on key health aims

Chris Millill
Medical Correspondent

GOVERNMENT plans to cut obesity, teenage smoking and female drinking are failing, the public spending watchdog said yesterday. The National Audit Office reported that far from reaching some of the key targets in its Health of the Nation strategy, in the three areas the trends were moving in the wrong direction.

The report points out that the proportion of obese men has reached 18 per cent compared to 7 per cent in 1987, and with women the proportion is now 16 per cent compared to 12 per cent previously. The targets were to reduce the proportion of obese men to 6 per cent and women to 8 per cent by 2005.

On alcohol levels, the National Audit Office says 1994 data shows no downward trend in the number of men drinking beyond the recommended limit, currently around 28 per cent. For women the proportion exceeding recommended levels has risen from 11 per cent in

1980 to 13 per cent in 1994. The target was 7 per cent by 2005. The office says smoking by children aged 11 to 15 has risen from 6 per cent in 1988 to 12 per cent in 1994, despite a target of 8 per cent by 1994.

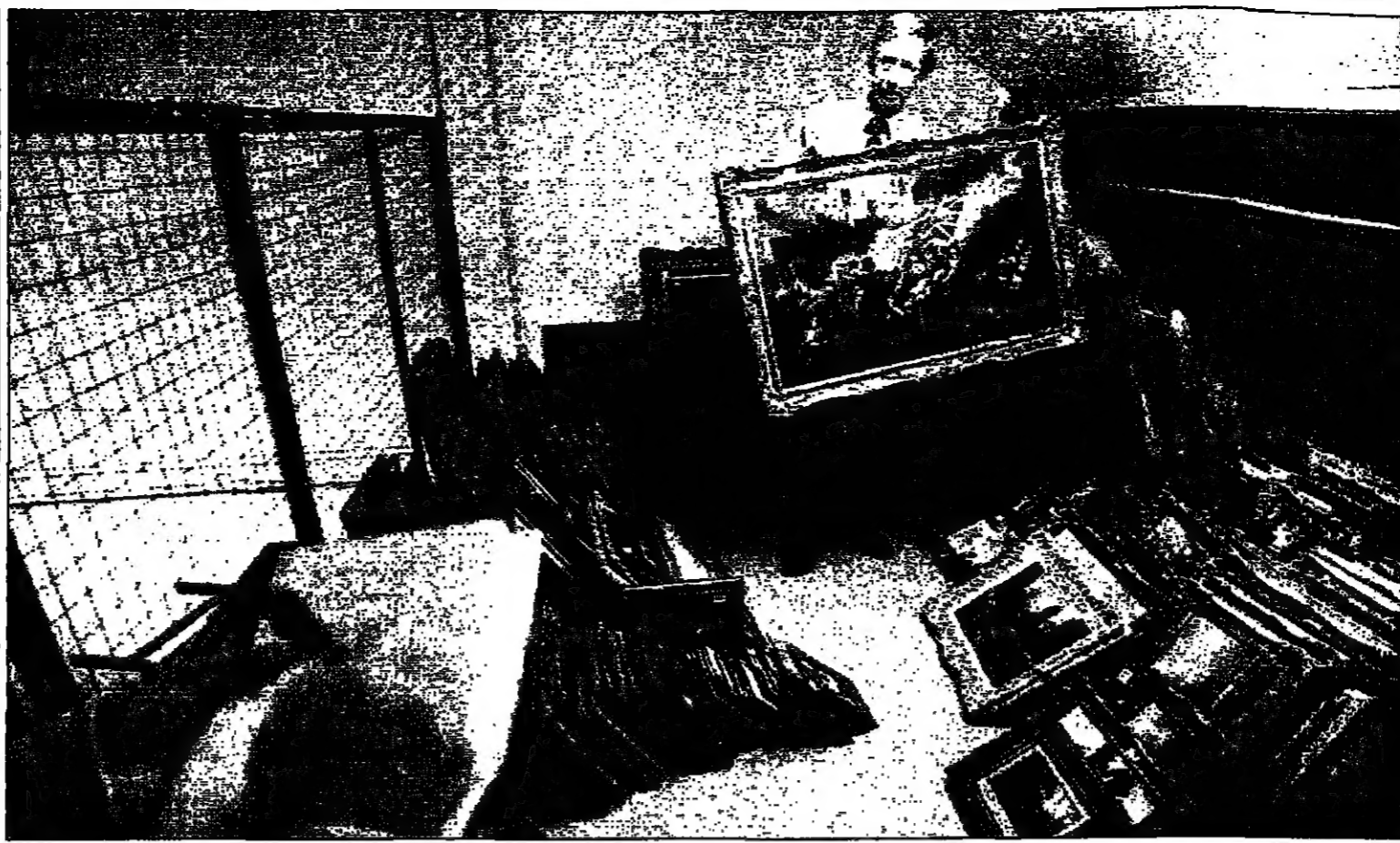
Good progress is being made on 11 of the 27 targets, including those for heart disease, stroke, breast cancer, lung cancer and suicide.

Stephen Dorrell, Health Secretary, said the Department of Health was spending £12 million over the next three years on anti-smoking messages to teenagers, but the Government was not in favour of a ban on tobacco advertising, because other methods were more effective.

The British Medical Association said the teenage smoking figures were "very disappointing, extremely worrying, but not at all surprising". Mac Armstrong, BMA secretary, said the figures were a "shocking indictment" of the lack of action in to combat carefully targeted tobacco advertising.

"These appalling statistics reinforce the BMA's call for an immediate ban on tobacco advertising as a step towards reversing an extremely worrying trend," he said.

Health of the Nation: A progress report, National Audit Office, HMSO, £8.95.



Auctioneer Andrew Hartley with some of the possibly forged paintings and (below) a portrait from the Wrights' collection PHOTOGRAPHS AZADOUR GUCELIAN

Conman's art stash goes on sale

Buyers beware at auction for charity of works collected by 'brilliant crook' who killed himself, writes Martin Wainwright

THE art world is preparing for its least predictable auction since the days of master forger Tom Keating when a bizarre stash of canvasses, altered oils and "good old 30th century plywood" goes under the hammer in Uxley, West Yorkshire.

Decorated with unusual provenance tags from North Yorkshire police, the 450 paintings — an unsolved muddle of genuine, fakes and half-and-half work — were left by an ingenious conman who committed suicide with his wife on the eve of his trial for fraud.

"We hope we've got most of the wrong 'uns out," said auctioneer Andrew Hartley, sorting through gilt-framed studies of Dutch windmills, moonlit Victorian streets and languorous nudes which have cluttered his likley showroom for more than a year.

"But we're going to make it very clear indeed that *conman's* — buyer beware — applies at this sale as at almost no other."

Although the auction cata-

logue names nearly 200 artists, Mr Hartley's foreword warns that more than 180 dubious signatures have been removed and that the paintings "may or may not be wholly or partly the work of the artist, or of his school, or one of his followers, or in his style, and of uncertain date."

With unusual honesty, it also emphasises that the hoard is known to consist largely of paintings which were "subject to alterations" by their owners, art dealers Gordon and Joan Wright of Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

This is an understatement, according to detectives who tried to unravel the strange affairs of Wright, a former railway clerk who amassed an estimated £1 million fortune.

A veteran of prison sentences totalling 10 years, he was described by lawyers as a "slippery customer" and by police as "a brilliant crook who could be extremely charming but was also an absolute bastard."

The Wrights were found dead in their fame-filled car



on May 5, 1992, leaving a message that "due to current police persecution, the light at the end of the tunnel will be switched off until further notice."

Already convicted of crimes including an "infallible" football pools system and conspiracy to defraud, Wright was due in court the following day, with his wife, to face a raft of forgery charges.

"The Wrights were known in Harrogate for their unusually rapid turnover of stock," said Mr Hartley, who caused a previous stir with a sale of

had excellent technique and the potential to earn on honest living by painting.

"Here's an example," said Mr Hartley, holding up an imitation Winterhalter, possibly by J.C. van Esen but probably with elements by G. Wright. "No matter who did it, it's a bloody good little painting."

"That's the approach we're taking to the sale. You've got to be frank; there's no other way."

Money from the auction, at Hartley's saleroom on Saturday afternoon, will go to charities nominated in their will by the Wrights, who referred to the paintings as their "children" (Wright left a nominal 25p to his actual son). But how much is anyone's guess.

"If it's genuine, this 19th century farmyard scene by Hunt could go for £2,000 to £2,500," said Mr Hartley. "If it's a total wrong 'un, which I don't think it is, it'll maybe fetch £500-£700. But with all the interest and background to the case, we may find another 20 per cent or so added on."

For the Wrights, in the words of their typewritten 10-page suicide note, the sale for charity will at least and at last "give our lives real meaning".

BBC pursues deal with US group for new pay channels

Andrew Cull
Media Correspondent

THE BBC was poised yesterday for a deal which could provide it with a long-awaited entry into the American television market and launch new channels in Britain.

Flextech, the European subsidiary of the American media giant Tele-Communications (TC), confirmed it was negotiating with the BBC over a possible joint venture to create new subscription channels.

The BBC would only confirm it was in discussions with a wide range of organisations as it prepared for the introduction of digital broadcasting, which will mean dozens of new channels in Britain.

TC, estimated to be worth

£22 billion and one of the world's largest media groups, could allow BBC Worldwide to gain a foothold in the highly competitive American television market. It is the largest cable television operator in the US. It could also allow the BBC to develop themed subscription channels at home for the advent of digital satellite television. Wildlife, nature and drama channels are ventures understood to be under consideration.

Flextech has a stake in 13 satellite channels, including TCC (The Children's Channel), Bravo and Playboy TV.

The BBC said: "Flextech have confirmed that they are in preliminary discussions with the BBC concerning a possible joint venture. As we look at our own digital future we are talking to a wide range of organisations about possible developments."

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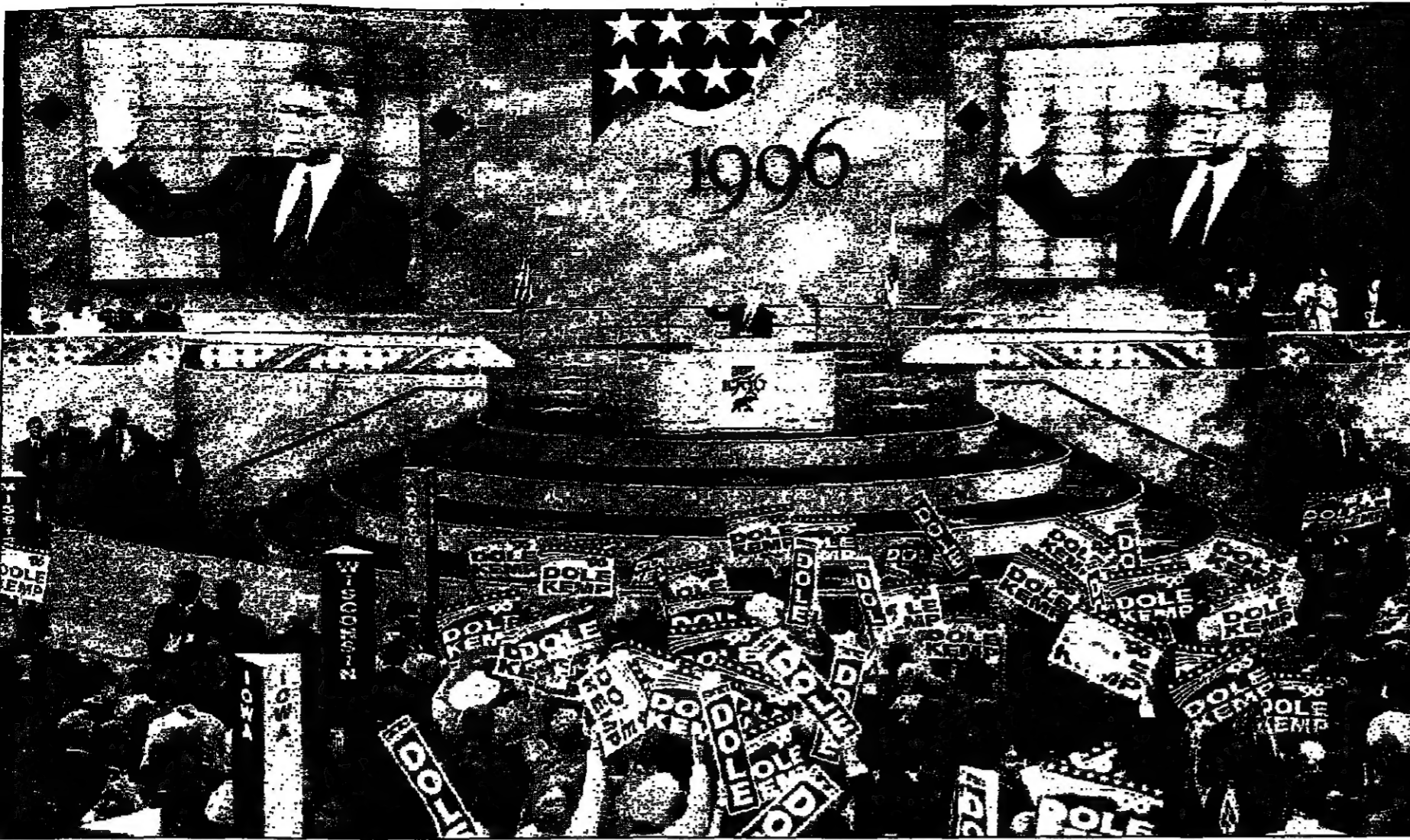
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Dixons

 There's a great deal going on

REPUBLICAN CONVENTION: Right held off by retired general's plea for compassion



Colin Powell, who was booed by some delegates, waves to the convention crowd before making a speech in which he supported abortion rights and affirmative action for minorities

Powell helps moderates win the day

Marth Walker in San Diego

THE Republican party accelerated its dash back to the electable centre of American politics yesterday, following a tightly-controlled script in which the former general Colin Powell's appeal for compassion was reinforced by party moderates, despite boos from religious conservatives.

ton's opinion poll lead over Mr. Dole left women preferring the Democrat by a 20-point margin. Taking the advice of a deathbed memo from Richard Nixon, who advised Mr Dole to win the nomination from the right and then campaign from the centre, the Republicans are also haunted by memories of their last convention. Marked by the declaration of a "cultural war" by the rightwing Pat Buchanan, the 1992 rally in Houston was a disaster, revealing the intolerant side of the religious right.

of Virginia said yesterday. "Compared to Houston, what you are seeing is a broader spectrum of the party." But the right is getting restless. Moderate Republicans were jeered yesterday by activists yelling "Abortion is murder" and Governor Pete Wilson of California and Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine gave a press conference. Mr Wilson was then heckled again on the convention floor, with shouts of "You libertines get out of the party!"

luts, adding "I told you when I became president I wasn't a Lincoln, I was just a Ford" and, in an extended pun on the names of American cars which was the best line of the convention so far: "What we have now in the White House is a convertible Dodge. Isn't it time we had a trade-in?"

But there is no doubting the prominence of the right at this convention, including figures like Vincent Bruno, the campaign strategist for the Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke in Louisiana. George Stephanopoulos and the Democrats' chairman, Senator Chris Dodd — the party's "truth squad" — are having a field day denouncing the conclave of extremists at daily news conferences outside the hall.

George Stephanopoulos and the Democrats' chairman, Senator Chris Dodd — the party's "truth squad" — are having a field day denouncing the conclave of extremists at daily news conferences outside the hall. "You almost have a tale of two conventions here," said Mr Dodd yesterday. "You have the convention that is owned and controlled by Pat Buchanan, then the other convention that puts Colin Powell up on the podium."

Party policy could halt hotel maids from Mexico

AP in San Ysidro, California

HALF an hour before sunrise, dozens of women walk across the border from Tijuana, Mexico, to the trolley bus station here, careful not to create a US-born relative. The Republican platform, should it ever become law, would make it much harder for Mexican parents to win citizenship for children born on US soil.

Bob wheels out the women in his life as the Doles play happy families for the cameras

The race for the White House is about to become a battle between rival clans. Jonathan Freedland reports.

WHEN his wife wants a serious chat, she makes an appointment. When his daughter wanted permission to pierce her ears, she sent a memo. But tonight Bob Dole's loved ones will pose as the traditional American family at the Republican convention in San Diego as the candidate recasts his battle with Bill Clinton as a clash between two clans. Starting tonight, it's a family affair. Elizabeth and Robin Dole will wave, smile and sing peanons of praise. They will beam proudly as a finely crafted video introduces "Bob Dole, the Man". They will tell charming anecdotes about the husband and father they love and why he should be president. Above all they will hint at a contrast with the Clintons — co-edly telling Americans they can choose the scarred war hero and his southern belle or the draft-dodging adulterer and his shrewish wife.

apartment in the Watergate complex in Washington. They spend so much time on the road that their staff fax each other's schedules. When Elizabeth wanted to discuss whether her husband should make a third run for the White House she arranged a Saturday morning meeting — at his office. They entertain rarely and spent half their nights in hotel rooms. Dinner is usually Chinese take-away or a restaurant ready-made meal. "The kitchen is not my natural habitat," she says. In fact, Elizabeth Dole is precisely the kind of woman demonised by US conservatives. She is a high-achieving, careerist, materialist in maternalism (Robin is the daughter of Mr Dole's first marriage). She is a politician in her own right, the only woman to have held two different cabinet posts: transport and labour under Presidents Reagan and Bush. She is a Harvard graduate and a first-class lawyer.



Elizabeth Dole: career woman plays southern belle. Mrs Clinton has been the more traditional wife, mothering her daughter and giving up her job. Mrs Dole's skill has been to sugar-coat her CV with southern charm and old-fashioned femininity. Her first boss, President Lyndon Johnson, called her "sugar lips". It is this face the Republican faithful and television audience have come to see. There will be no reference to the multimillion-dollar fortune she has amassed from speaking fees and lucrative investments, made with the help of a friend later convicted of tax fraud. Instead she plans to deploy a technique she has honed, mingling among the delegates with a microphone, Oprah Winfrey style.

to play at her high school level. He said, "I have never met Mr. Specht — to this day I have never seen him. He approached us through a local representative." The scandal is reminiscent of goings-on in neighbouring Colombia, where President Ernesto Samper has been accused of actively seeking the large contributions which the Cali cartel is known to have made to his campaign. But while Washington has put pressure on the Colombian president to resign, its embassy in Panama City has been supportive of Mr. Balladras. "We have not seen our relationship significantly affected by the narco-cheques scandal," a US official said. "And we have been impressed by the president's openness."

RETIRED army colonel Shahriar Rashid Kahn (centre) is driven off in a Bangladesh police car yesterday. He was one of three former army officers arrested for the assassination of the independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. Mohammed Khairuzzaman were arrested at houses in Dhaka. They will be detained for one month under the Special Powers Act. Police said they were likely to face charges of murder, rebelling against a legally installed government, and being involved in a 1986 attempt to import arms from Libya. At least 10 other former army officers are still being sought. Although the three men publicly admitted killing Mujib and most of his family in 1975, they were later granted immunity from prosecution by the government of General Ziaur Rahman. The installation of the Awami League government — led by Mujib's daughter, Sheikh Hasina — seven weeks ago prompted the action against them. — Arshad Mahmud, Dhaka.

Panama drug story refuses to be blown away

Phil Gussman in Panama City

PINNED to a room divider near Gustavo Gorriti's desk in La Prensa's open-plan office is a sheet of paper bearing nuggets of advice on the work of a reporter. "Being a journalist," one of them reads, "means fearing neither winds nor hurricanes when covering the news."

raised the issue of tainted campaign contributions the president accused it of "journalistic terrorism" and threatened to sue. Shortly afterwards, as La Prensa closed in on the truth, he was forced into an embarrassing climbdown. Unknowningly, he said, he had endorsed two cheques totalling \$51,000 (\$22,000) which came from José Castrillon Henao, allegedly the man running the Cali cocaine cartel's Panamanian money-laundering operation. Mr Castrillon, now awaiting trial in a Panamanian jail, is accused of using Banaco — turn money from drug sales into untraceable funds for use in apparently legitimate

businesses. At the time of the bank's collapse he had \$2.6 million (£1.7 million) in Banaco accounts. Another of the bank's best customers was a German, Friedrich Adolf Specht, who now lives in the Netherlands after completing a five-year sentence for fraud in the US. Last month the Miami Herald revealed that Mr Specht, who is also suspected by US investigators of involvement in money-laundering, contributed at least \$500,000 to the 1994 Panamanian election campaign. The president admits that \$200,000 went towards his own fund, but says informal efforts to check Mr Specht's credentials turned up nothing.

While the winds may gather strength, neither the newspaper nor its associate editor has yet shown signs of fearing the hurricane.

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News in brief

Serbs allow arms site inspection

THE British commander of Nato-led ground forces in Bosnia personally inspected a Bosnian Serb weapons storage site yesterday, easing the tension caused when Serb soldiers barred access to Nato peacekeepers. The 53,000-strong peace implementation force (I-FOR) remained on heightened alert, however, as Nato officers reviewed the security situation in the wake of several days of friction and threats. Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker escorted the Bosnian Serb president, Biljana Plavsic, to the arms dump at Ban Pucak to ensure compliance with the weapons inspection requirements in the Dayton peace agreement. The Serbs refusal to allow Nato inspectors into the site on Saturday triggered a crisis which culminated on Monday in Gen Walker ordering precautionary steps to be taken for a possible confrontation. I-FOR withdrew vulnerable units from Serb territory, and an estimated 500 UN policemen were pulled back to I-FOR bases. — Julian Borger, Zagreb.

Cape vigilante charged

SOUTH AFRICAN police yesterday arrested a leader of the Muslim vigilante group responsible for the lynching last week of a gangster in Cape Town. He was charged with sedition, and prosecutors said further charges, including murder, might be added later. Nathumie Edries, a co-ordinator of People against Gangsterism and Drugs (Pagad), will be detained until Thursday, when a court will consider bail. It was the first arrest since the killing of the leader of the Hard Living gang, Rashad Staggie, who was shot and burned to death in front of police and television cameras. Police said Mr Edries's co-leaders, Ali Parker and Farouk Jaffer, were not found when they raided their homes yesterday. Muslim community leaders immediately protested against the crackdown. A spokesman for the Muslim Judicial Council, Sheikh Nazam Mohammed, described the vigilantes as "decent and honourable people". — David Baresford and agencies.

Poisoning deaths reach 37

THE toll from food poisoning at a workers' canteen near Bombay rose to 37 with the deaths of five more people in the past 24 hours, doctors and officials said yesterday. At least 50 more are still in a critical condition. The dead and injured were among 120 people who complained of giddiness, aches and vomiting hours after they ate contaminated food last week at a canteen in the textile town of Bhiwandi, about 75 miles north of Bombay. Doctors said that tests suggested the source of the poisoning could be the seeds of white datura (thorn-apple), a poisonous weed that flowers during the monsoon. The state health secretary, K. S. Barol, earlier said that traces of white datura were found in flour samples collected from the canteen. Only those who ate chappatis — unleavened bread — appeared to have fallen ill. Police were said to be looking for seven cooks who went missing after the poisoning outbreak. — Reuter, Bombay.

Alarm at border kidnap

FOREIGN owners of hundreds of factories in the free trade zone along the Mexican-California border have been alarmed by the kidnapping of a Japanese executive and his company's decision to pay a ransom demand. Gunmen seized Mamoru Koma, head of Sanyo Video Components, from the border town of Tijuana on Saturday. They demanded \$2 million for his return. Company executives in Osaka said yesterday that they would pay up. The kidnapping of wealthy businessmen in Mexico is not uncommon, but this is believed to be the first abduction of a foreigner in the free-trade area. It is expected to change the relaxed atmosphere of maquiladoras, factories employing mainly Mexicans to assemble goods for sale in the United States. About 8,000 foreigners shuttle across the border each day to manage 750 factories in the Tijuana area. — Christopher Reed, Los Angeles.

US help for coup sought

THE United States ambassador to Colombia, Myles Frechette, has revealed that a civilian group claiming to represent a faction in the Colombian military approached him last year to ask about possible American support for a military coup. Mr Frechette, in an interview on the 24 Hours television news programme, said he rejected the overture and told the group that Washington had no interest in seeing President Ernesto Samper ousted by military force. "It wasn't a senior military official," he said, when asked about rumours that a top army official had approached him. "I don't know if it was true," he added. "But I can assure you that those people, and there were several, left my embassy knowing that my government would never, in any way or at any time, accept that kind of a solution." US relations with Colombia have deteriorated sharply in the past year because of accusations that Mr Samper used drug money to finance his 1994 election campaign. Senior military officials have repeatedly denied rumours that they considered a coup last summer to oust Mr Samper. — Reuter, Bogotá.

Ex-officers held for murder



RETIRED army colonel Shahriar Rashid Kahn (centre) is driven off in a Bangladesh police car yesterday. He was one of three former army officers arrested for the assassination of the independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. Mohammed Khairuzzaman were arrested at houses in Dhaka. They will be detained for one month under the Special Powers Act. Police said they were likely to face charges of murder, rebelling against a legally installed government, and being involved in a 1986 attempt to import arms from Libya. At least 10 other former army officers are still being sought. Although the three men publicly admitted killing Mujib and most of his family in 1975, they were later granted immunity from prosecution by the government of General Ziaur Rahman. The installation of the Awami League government — led by Mujib's daughter, Sheikh Hasina — seven weeks ago prompted the action against them. — Arshad Mahmud, Dhaka.

Nepal buries monkey gods

PRIESTS chanted hymns and performed Hindu rituals yesterday as religious officials in Nepal's holiest temple gave a mass burial to 30 monkeys which died of electric shocks. "We performed all religious rites as the monkeys were laid to rest," said Chetunath Gautam, a senior official of the Pashupati area development trust. At least 30 monkeys were killed early yesterday after touching a high-voltage wire. "Monkeys are gods and more religious ceremonies will be performed for them," Mr Gautam said. Fifty-one Brahmin priests recited verses from Hindu holy scriptures at the Laxmi Pashupati temple as the dead animals, wrapped in white shrouds, were lowered into a grave. According to Hindu tradition, people are cremated but animals are buried. — Reuter, Katmandu.

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Inquiry damns Burundi's army staff

Chris McGreal in Bujumbura

A CONFIDENTIAL United Nations report into the murder of Burundi's first Hutu president — kept under wraps because of its potentially explosive impact on the conflict-ravaged country — accuses the army high command of organising the assassination and of complicity in the subsequent slaughter of Hutu civilians by Tutsi soldiers.

While the report does not directly name those responsible for the killing of President Melchior Ndadaye three years ago, it criticises the actions of several officers, including the army chief of staff. The UN reaches no conclusion about the role of Bu-

runndi's past and present military head of state, Major Pierre Buyoya.

The report also condemns Hutu leaders, accusing some of whipping up a genocide against the Tutsi minority in the wake of the assassination, which started Burundi's civil war.

Maj Buyoya, who seized power three weeks ago, has vowed that no one is above the law. Hutus have accused Burundi's Tutsi-dominated establishment of stalling its own inquiry into the assassination, while key witnesses have disappeared and died.

The UN commission of inquiry into Ndadaye's killing completed its report last month, but it was swiftly secreted away. Only members of the UN Security Council have been permitted to read it, and then for only 30 minutes each.

In sections of the report obtained by the Guardian, the UN inquiry focuses on two areas: the October 1993 coup and assassination of Ndadaye, who won Burundi's first free election four months earlier, and the massacres of an estimated 50,000 Hutus and Tutsis in the weeks after the murder.

The Burundian government has never denied soldiers were responsible for the assassination, but it has portrayed them as low-ranking renegades. The UN commission reaches a different conclusion. "The assassination of President Ndadaye was planned beforehand as an integral part of the coup that overthrew him... and the planning and execution of the coup was carried out by officers highly placed in the line of command of Burundi's army," the report says.

Hutu MPs kept off last flights out of Bujumbura

BURUNDI'S new military regime last night banned 15 citizens, most of them Hutu parliamentarians, from leaving on what were expected to be the last two commercial flights from Bujumbura for some time, writes Chris McGreal.

But among those that boarded the aeroplanes for Belgium was the widow of Melchior Ndadaye, Burundi's first Hutu president, who was assassinated by the army three years ago.

Pascalie Ntibantunganya, wife of the president removed in a military coup three weeks ago, and the ousted president's sister also left last night. Mr Ntibantunganya was believed to be still sheltering in the

American ambassador's residence.

When regional sanctions shut down most air routes and land frontiers, the United States and several European governments advised their nationals to leave Bujumbura as soon as possible, even though there is no immediate threat to the city.

Hutus, devastated at the loss of a man who held out the promise of an end to decades of oppression, turned on the Tutsi minority. Thousands were killed. The UN commission says the army retaliated with considerable brutality.

"Indiscriminate killing of Hutu men, women and children was carried out by mem-

bers of Burundi's army and the gendarmerie, and by Tutsi civilians. Although no evidence was obtained to indicate that the repression was centrally planned or ordered, it is an established fact that no effort was made by the military authorities at any level of command to prevent, stop, investigate or punish such acts," it says.

The commission concludes that organised killing was not one-sided. It says that after Ndadaye's assassination, members of the murdered president's party, Frodebu, spurred "a genocide" of the Tutsi minority.

"The commission considers there is sufficient evidence that acts of genocide against

the Tutsi minority took place in Burundi on 31 October 1993, with the participation of certain Frodebu functionaries and leaders up to commune level," the report says.

It concludes that senior Frodebu officials were expecting a coup, and prepared Hutus to resist it. But the UN commission says it has no evidence that the attempted genocide was organised from the top of Frodebu.

While the commission says it does not have enough evidence to accuse specific individuals of plotting the assassination, it is particularly damning towards the army chief of staff, Colonel Jean Bikomagu. The report recounts actions by Col Bikomagu which suggest he had full knowledge of what was occurring. It notes that he failed to intervene as his soldiers assassinated the president, set

up a ruling committee, and continued massacring Hutus even after the coup collapsed.

"The committee was in control for three days and only reinstated civilian government when it failed to control the bloodbath throughout the country, in spite of the bloody repression by the army under Bikomagu's command, and had lost all hope of overcoming the adamant opposition of the international community," the report says.

Col Bikomagu, who remains in his command, declined to be interviewed. But the head of military intelligence, Colonel Jean-Benoit Daradange, dismissed the UN report. "We're not learning anything new here. The assassination concerns individuals who are not the whole army."

Bullets fly as Russians report Chechen 'truce'

Lawrence Sheets in Grozny

FIGHTING raged in Grozny yesterday as Russian troops tried to claw back territory lost when rebels seized much of the Chechen capital eight days ago.

But according to a report on Russian television, an agreement had been reached between commanders of the two sides for a ceasefire starting at noon today.

"An agreement was reached to halt military operations across all Chechen territory from 12 o'clock [Chechen time] tomorrow and provide all the necessary humanitarian corridors," the broadcast said.

Throughout the day mortars, shells and rockets crashed down on the city, and refugees ran a gauntlet of bullets and explosions to flee their homes.

Despite an army statement on Monday that Russian forces had halted air strikes, helicopter gunships attacked positions close to where women and children were struggling to cross a river.

"Please tell them to open a corridor," pleaded Raisa Sukhanova as she fled with her baby across a railway bridge.

"There are thousands of people trapped back there," she said.

Warplanes flew over a southern suburb, sending up a huge black cloud when a bomb apparently hit an oil storage area.

"There's your ceasefire for you," a woman said.

News agencies quoted Russian officials as claiming the army had made significant territorial gains by the end of the day.

Representatives of Chechen's pro-Moscow authorities accused the army of firing on civilians and stopping thousands leaving.

A statement by a Chechen mission in Moscow said: "Tens of thousands of people are trapped on the outskirts of Grozny without food supplies and with a catastrophic lack of medicine."

The Russian migration service said it had received 10 billion roubles (£1.35 million) to cope with a new wave of refugees from Grozny, numbering tens of thousands.

The European Commission in Brussels approved an aid package worth £3.5 million for Chechnya, bringing total European Union assistance to nearly £30 million in 20 months of war. EU experts believe that more than 100,000 Chechens lack food and up to half the population of about 1.3 million requires medical aid.

At a hospital in Urus-Martan, south of Grozny, doctors had no choice but to operate without anaesthetic.

The latest fighting has forced the Kremlin to rethink its policy on Chechnya, which declared itself independent in 1991.

President Yeltsin's security chief, General Alexander Lebed, said on Monday he believed that the mainly Muslim rebels might agree to a degree of autonomy short of secession. The separatists have not committed.

Many guerrillas said they would not leave Grozny, which they stormed after weeks of Russian attacks on Chechen villages.

One fighter, Akhmed, aged 32, gritted his teeth and said: "Leave? Never. Now that we've taken the city, we'll never give it up."

Few refugees blamed the rebels for the violence. "The thing to do is to have the troops leave. They are destroying our people," said Subhan, a man fleeing with his two children. — Reuter.



A Russian soldier covers comrades in the government compound in Grozny. Hundreds have died trying to retake the city. PHOTOGRAPH: VASSILY DETCHIKOV

Nasser lives on as hero of film

Le Monde

Alfredo Bucciantini in Cairo

GAMAL ABDEL Nasser is taking Egyptian box offices by storm. Since its release here last week the film of his key role in the Suez crisis, Nasser '68, has proved a stunning success.

Shot in black and white, the film has stirred nostalgia for a golden age when Egypt was able to defeat the great colonial powers of Britain and France. At the film's Cairo preview, attended by Nasser's daughter, the actor who plays the leading role, Ahmed Zaki, was carried shoulder high out of the cinema in triumph.

Some members of the audience also took the opportunity to chant slogans protesting against the restoration of relations with Israel, for Nasser remains the symbol of resistance against the Jewish state. When reels of the unedited film were destroyed by fire in 1995, many fingers pointed at the Israeli secret service.

Cinema treatments of the touchy subject of Egyptian-Israeli relations have often fallen foul of the censors: a screenplay by the Syrian Rafiq El Sabani which included scenes of a brief romance between an Egyptian boy and an Israeli girl had to be scrapped recently when it was refused a certificate.

Part from an unsuccessful plan for an Egyptian-Israeli co-production announced in 1980, the subject of Egyptian-Israeli relations has only twice been attempted on film. The first, made in the early 1990s and called *Love at Tabaa*, was the story of three Egyptians who contracted the Aids virus after spending the night with three Israeli Mossad agents.

The second, filmed last year in London by Khaled El Nagar, an Egyptian of Palestinian extraction, tells of a love affair between an Egyptian and an Israeli. It created an outcry at the International Festival in Ismailia because it was considered too pro-Jewish.



Nasser: screen portrayal of his Suez days is big success

No love lost between Ossis and Wessis

East and west Berliners seem to find one another a turn-off, writes Ian Traynor

GERMAN politicians reached for their dictionary of platitudes yesterday — 35 years since the Berlin Wall was built — with calls for national unity and a healing of the rift that continues to divide east from west.

But seven years after the 105 miles of concrete and barbed wire were swept away, west and east Berliners would rather marry almost anyone than one another.

Of 16,383 weddings in Berlin last year, according to the city registry, only 582 bridged the yawning gulf that continues, wall or no wall, to split the capital city.

The statistics also highlight a gender gap in the hunt for a partner.

An east Berlin woman is twice as likely to marry a west Berlin man than the other way around.

Of the 582 east-west unions in the German capital last year, 37 were of eastern females joining western partners, while 186 west Berliners became the wives of east Berliners.

Census researchers and sociologists say there is little socialising between the two halves of the city — and of the country.

Which does not mean that Berliners, male or female, eastern or western, are shy of seeking out spouses further afield.

From the statistics, it appears that Berliners find more in common with Slavs, Africans and Asians than they do with prospective partners from the other side of their city.

Around 23 per cent of marriages were between Berliners and foreigners, as opposed to 4 per cent between Ossis and Wessis.

Almost 1,900 Berlin women and some 1,700 men opted for a foreigner.

The most eligible foreign males were Turks, followed by emigrants from former Yugoslavia. Berlin men chose Polish women, closely followed by Thais.

While Chancellor Helmut Kohl enjoyed his countrymen to use their "hearts and hands" to complete the process of German unity, there is scant sign that east and west Berliners are losing their hearts to their compatriots.

But if east and west Berliners are romantically turned off by one another, they are also increasingly unmoved by the whole idea of marriage. The city's marriage rate fell by more than 5 per cent last year, with almost 2,000 fewer people tying the knot than in 1994.

The relatively high rate of Germans marrying foreigners suggests that all-German couples are becoming inclined to forego marriage and simply live together.

A foreign partner is more likely to opt for wedlock to secure residence and work permits and social security benefits.

Priebke faces German trial

Ian Traynor in Bonn

GERMANY has formally requested the extradition of Erich Priebke from Italy, raising the prospect that the former SS officer, aged 83, could yet be sentenced for his part in the murder of 335 Italians and Jews in 1944.

Two weeks ago a war crimes trial in Rome found Priebke guilty of participating in the massacre but freed him because his crime was covered by a statute of limitations and could no longer be punished.

That sparked worldwide outrage, raising pressure for a trial in Germany.

The prospects for a successful extradition and fresh trial are unclear because of legal and judicial loopholes surrounding the extradition request, which was forwarded on Monday. Surprising extra-judicially, the German authorities give the state prosecutor's office in Dortmund wants Priebke tried for murder because he has already admitted personally killing two of the 335 massacred at the Ard-

atine caves near Rome in a reprisal for an Italian partisan attack.

Last year, however, a German court acquitted Wolfgang Lehnigk-Emden who as a German army lieutenant in 1943 massacred 15 women and children in the Italian town of Cetazzo, on the grounds that he was guilty of manslaughter. In Germany manslaughter, unlike murder, is covered by a statute of limitations.

German military historian, Gerhard Schreiber, said that he had studied 18 atrocities perpetrated by Germans in Italy during the war and in no case had the German judicial system categorised the crimes as murder.

Some experts also fear that the German request could interfere with the appeals procedure in Italy and help Priebke to go free. Germany's Auschwitz Committee, a war crimes lobbying group, has argued against extradition, citing the previous prosecution failures and arguing that Priebke may yet be sentenced in Italy.

Germany has also requested the extradition from Italy of another former SS officer, Karl Hass, who allegedly involved in the Ardeatine massacre and who testified in the Priebke case.

Mr Hass, aged 84, is believed to be undergoing treatment in a Rome clinic after jumping from a window to try to avoid being called as a witness. Until his appearance in Rome, German prosecutors thought Mr Hass was dead.

News in brief

Jail for scam vandals

A Jewish father and son were jailed for three and eight years respectively in Florida yesterday for committing anti-Semitic vandalism and making money by repairing the damage.

Al and Steven Rubin were found guilty of vandalising school buses and spray-painting anti-Semitic slogans and swastikas at Hillel community school, Miami. — Reuter.

Haiti killing

A Haitian policeman was shot dead by unidentified gunmen, the eighth off-duty police officer to be killed in and around the Haitian capital since March. — Reuter.

Algerian victims

Six people, including a journalist, have been killed in a bomb explosion and two attacks by gunmen in Algeria, Algerian newspapers said yesterday. — Reuter.

Fishy business

Police in Bolshoi Kamen in the Russian Far East have confiscated 2,640lbs of dried sea cucumber — an endangered sea creature — in a local man's house. — AP.

'New settlements' cause outcry

Derek Brown in Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S opposition has joined Palestinian leaders in condemning the government's latest moves to step up Jewish colonisation of the occupied territories.

The announcement that 300 mobile homes are to be sent to the territories has already been condemned by the PLO chairman, Yasser Arafat, as a violation of the self-rule peace accords. Other Palestinians have called the decision unacceptable, and the militant Islamist movement Hamas has called for mass protests.

Palestinian anger was echoed yesterday by Yossi Sarid, leader of the leftwing Meretz faction.

"This is only a beginning. We know that the plan of the new government is to add to the Jewish inhabitants in the occupied territories, about 50,000-60,000 in two years," he told Israel radio.

"We believe, and very firmly so, that Jewish settlements in the occupied territories were and still are the main obstacle on the way to peace."

"If the new government is determined to establish new

settlements or to expand previous settlements [we believe] that a new wave of terror is possible; a new intifada [Palestinian uprising] might erupt, and the whole situation will deteriorate from a security point of view."

Warnings that renewed settlement construction, the number of Jewish residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip increased by more than 40 per cent to an estimated 150,000. Around two million Arabs live in the territories, most of them in the enclaves controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

The prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, told Arab journalists that settlement expansion would not breach the self-rule accords.

Under the accords, Israel is pledged to negotiate a permanent settlement with the PLO in the coming three years. The talks will cover boundaries, Palestinian refugees, the status of Jerusalem, and Jewish settlements.

Israel has repeatedly

accused the PLO of trying to pre-empt the so-called final status talks, by, for example, opening offices in Jerusalem. The flow of Jewish settlers into disputed territory, however, does not seem to count any more than the de-facto annexation of Jerusalem which, again through settlement, now has a Jewish majority.

Israel is planning to expel up to 100,000 illegal immigrant workers who have flooded into the country to take the jobs of Palestinians confined to the occupied territories.

A three-year series of bans on Palestinians, imposed in the wake of bombings in Israel, has thrown nearly 100,000 people, mostly labourers, out of work. Their places have been taken by 100,000 guest workers.

At the same time, the Israeli economy has drawn in tens of thousands more, mostly from Africa and eastern Europe. Now the government is relaxing the ban on Palestinian workers, to shore up the economy of the self-rule areas, and is also responding to widespread public concern about the social impact of the invasion of low-paid immigrants.

Go on, Clare; stop sulking and send Mandy some paper dolls. He is sure to come rushing round to your office, hoppity-skip, with all sorts of scrumptious treats.

Francis Wheen

A contemptible report

The gun lobby wins, lock, stock and barrel

NO WONDER the gun lobby was celebrating last night. The final report from the Conservative-controlled select committee looking at gun controls was even better for gun freaks than earlier leaks suggested; not just the rejection of a ban on handguns but the repudiation of a host of other ideas including partial bans, calibre controls, and new restrictions on the number of guns that an individual could hold.

out for a hotch-potch of specious reasons: lost trade, cost of compensation to existing handgun owners, unfair interference with legitimate shooting club members, and a "minimal" improvement in public safety.

No one seriously suggests that a ban on handguns can stop determined and undesirable people obtaining them. Of course they can't. That is not the only point of a ban. The MPs have been too mechanistic. They should have paid more heed to the reference of Sir Jim Sharples, the President of the Association of Chief Police Officers, to Britain's developing gun culture.

Fortunately, Sir Ivan Lapdog (né Lawrence) and his chums were not just repudiated by Opposition MPs, chief constables and Dunblane parents yesterday but by ministers too. David Maclean, the duty Home Office minister, made it clear the Government would bring forward gun-control legislation but was waiting for Cullen, the formal inquiry into Dunblane which is due to report shortly.

There is a further message which ministers appear to have taken on board. As David Maclean noted, there are only 57,000 handgun certificates in Britain but over 750,000 people signed the recent anti-handgun petition. It is time to call the gun lobby's bluff.

Four countries in need of help

The UN must tackle Burundi as part of a regional problem

BURUNDI'S desperate situation eased very slightly yesterday when Tanzania allowed relief aid from the World Food Program to enter through its territory. The "total economic ban" on Burundi agreed two weeks ago at the summit of seven African states now seems increasingly like a council of despair.

seek a way out. This would set a deadline for successful negotiations between Tutsis and Hutus, backed up by the promise of international financial aid if a political settlement could be reached. If this failed, then sanctions would be imposed by the UN directly and, "as a last resort", military deployment to guarantee humanitarian aid.

The idea of insisting that the deposed president Sylvestre Ntibantunganya must be restored to power seems to be fading. And enough ambiguity persists about the man who has seized charge, Major Pierre Buyoya, for it to be argued that he may at the moment be the least worst alternative.

The international community, through the UN, now needs to put its money up front in a plan which would simultaneously tackle the problem in all four countries. This could be broached through a reconvened regional summit; but it requires a much clearer commitment directly from the Security Council.

Keeping the fans off the grass

But what greater tribute can a supporter pay a club?

STILL recovering from their brutal 3-0 defeat by Liverpool in the FA Cup semi-final, Aston Villa fans are suffering another blow. They have been banned from having their ashes sprinkled on the pitch.

press such loyal esprit de corps? It is common practice among Ajax fans in Amsterdam, though the Spanish club Betis prefers one fan who carries his father's ashes in a small urn to each match. Once there, he places them on the seat next to him and, every time Betis scores, he gives them a little shake.

Indeed, it doesn't. Being sprinkled off-side is one thing, but it turns out that the most popular request is to be trickled gently in the centre spot. And though, as gardening readers will know, a small, infrequent amount of ash can act as a potent fertiliser, Mr Small has found himself sprinkling up to three fans a week. On top of that he has a brand new pitch to protect. Not a simple task, as his opposite number at Tottenham discovered two years ago.

Should the latter seem like a scene from Monty Python, let us not forget the example of Python's own Graham Chapman who made his final appearance at a meeting of the Directors' Guild in Hollywood. Giving the opening speech, Eric Idle strode on to the stage and observed sadly that "Graham would've absolutely loved to have been here tonight so... here he is!"



Letters to the Editor

Let's hear that whistle blow

ON JULY 15 you carried a story on a report made public by CND, which revealed details of an accident at Greenham Common in 1985, which the authors, F H Cripps and A Stimson, of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) at Aldermaston, believed involved the incineration of a nuclear weapon.

Labour's dark voices

PETER Kellner (Gamboling on gurus who won't choose red, August 10) warns against shooting the messenger regarding advice given to the Labour Party leadership by its spin doctors. So just what is the message? Appeal to the base instincts of a poorly-informed electorate? Placate them with talk about fast-track punishment and assure them there will be tough rules on government spending?

THERE are some ways in which electoral politics is like selling brands, so focus groups are useful. However, there is another way in which it is essentially different. If, for instance, Black Label whisky Dopa, Chivas Regal proper — because competitors in the marketplace are selling similar products with different labels.

The business of babies

I HAVE been drawing up a list of recent policy retreats by the Labour Party and I am now up to 23. I presume from Peter Kellner's article that focus groups prove these changes to be "popular with the voters Labour must attract". But I am with Martin Kettle (August 10) in thinking it is not "leadership" to give these groups what they say they want.

Off the track

AS victims of the Watford rail crash (Letters, August 12) leave hospital and the bereaved endure their loss, they may be well advised to study what has happened at Stafford since the rail crash there in March. Five months later, no compensation has been paid and Railtrack's "independent" inquiry has cleared Railtrack of blame.

Curtain up

IF the latest childish poster from Conservative Central Office (Chronic Criticisms Tory "democratic" ads, August 13) is not intended to appeal to "smearing so-called intellectuals of Islington" I would, as a resident of Islington, like to know why there are at least six Tory posters in the area.

Going with the flow

F RANK Keating's call for English rugby to ditch the Five Nations and join the southern hemisphere sides in a separate contest (Forgetting the pussypoofing, Twickenham, August 12) displays English rugby's traditional characteristics of supreme arrogance and self-delusion.

A club you'll never need to join

YOUR article (Churchgoing bottoms out, August 10) and the accompanying statistics, "How Christian are we?", is misleading as far as the Church of England is concerned. This is apparent in the comment from Raymond Tongue, head of Church of England statistics, concerning membership.

A Country Diary

CHILTERN: The seasonal bearing of the trees here almost early healthy. Last August, every deciduous species was in a state of disarray — weather-beaten, leaves chewed to tatters by predators, or withered by mould, or shed prematurely to reduce water-loss during drought.

Off the track

THE UK Turner Syndrome Society would like to correct the impression that Turner syndrome is fatal (Letters, August 13). It is not. Although 99 per cent of foetuses abort spontaneously, there are 1,000-2,500 girls born with the syndrome. Statistically, there are some 9,000 women with Turner syndrome in the UK. The condition is one of the commonest chromosomal disorders with a lack of abnormality of the second X chromosome and is caused by an accident at conception.

Off the track

It can affect those with the condition in varying degrees. Ariane Smyth, Chairperson, UK Turner Syndrome Society, Child Growth Foundation, 2 Mayfield Avenue, London W4 1PW.

Off the track

JOANNA Coles's interview (August 10) misses the point why regard to contraception. The culture of contraception is a keystone in the western obsession with convenience and self-fulfilment. It appears to offer sex without responsibility but cannot do so without abortion as its backstop for when things go wrong.

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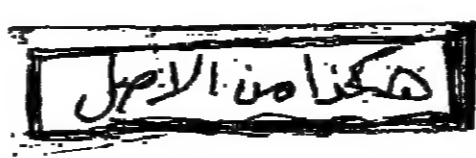
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RICHARD MABEY



Diary
Matthew Norman

BURKE'S Peerage World Books Of... the latest money spinning venture of that "constitutional expert" Harold Brooks-Baker, continues to thrive. These personalised guides to global families make the perfect gift for the would-be genealogist, and as we learnt from Lib-Dem whip Lord Tordoff, whose personalised invitation to buy was addressed to Mr Tordoff, Harry hardly exaggerates when he boasts of "the highly sophisticated computer resources" and "knowledge and talent of innumerable skilled individuals" that go into each opus. Take the World Book of Sudbury, George Sudbury writes from Winchester to report that his World Book told him that there are more clan members in Ontario than elsewhere in Canada — and, indeed, he found a few more than 13 and who are they, these long-lost relatives? Well, there's Bingo Sudbury and Kating Sudbury, uncle Welding Sudbury and dear old cousin Truck Sudbury. Windsor Sudbury and little Vascular Sudbury. As George notes, all his relatives appear to come from the Ontario town of... Sudbury. Spooky.

OBSESSANT citizens of Stuttgart have noticed fewer dogs on the streets recently. According to Dogs Today magazine, a worried woman asked her neighbour to look out for her missing mongrel during his night patrol. If he found it, she begged, could he possibly drop it down her coal chute? He passed the message on to colleagues and the next morning she descended to the cellar to find herself the proud owner of no fewer than seven confused dogs.

CONSPIRACY theorists continue to muse on the location of that Clare Short interview, and they wonder, could it possibly have appeared in the magazine owned by Geoffrey Robinson, provider of Mr Tony Blair's holiday homes and, apparently, an ambitious and ultra-loyal MP? One explanation is that an Harrogate is a more courageous editor of the New Statesman than he was of the Independent, and that he simply adores running articles dangerous to Mr Blair without his proprietor's consent. The second notes that the midwife in the magazine's rebirth as a New Labour production was Ed Balls, Gordon Brown's closest adviser, and that Mr Robinson himself may be even closer to Mr Blair than to Mr Blair. Even to consider this theory, however, is to imply a factional element to New Labour that would, quite rightly, be met by the most rapid of rebuttals.

SPRINKLING of which, the Mandy Mandelson errand boy Oofy Wegg-Fraser, the chief leader of New Labour's PG Wodehouse wing, set a personal best yesterday. He dismissed a strong rumour that Mandy spent much of the summer in pre-season training with Harlepool United (and that he hopes to appear occasionally at centre-half) with a "No" officially timed at 0.625 seconds. Once again, however, as with last week's ZZ Top beard inquiry, he failed to check with Mandy himself. No doubt the young pup knows what he's doing, but it does seem to me to be taking a terrible risk.

KIPFLING would be watching my nose and rational friend Paul Johnson exceedingly closely today, for hot on the heels of his triumph (the confident prediction that outer space will soon be colonised) he has suffered a disaster. Paul is host of the editorship of the Catholic Herald he so coveted to Deborah Jones, deputy editor of Priests & People magazine. Rumours that the election for Moonie-style mass weddings counted against him are unconfirmed. Then again, they are un rebutted.

OKI Magazine arrives, and we search for a Brandeth's Brainstorm. The Chester MP has surpassed himself this week with puzzle number five. Name Check. Beside pictures of Nigel Benn, Ben Elton and Elton John, Gyles asks: "Can you work out the connection between them?" Well, can you?



An invitation to the Rt Hon John Gummer

Commentary
Catherine Bennett

AFTER a nice breakfast, there is nothing John Gummer loves more than to defend it from global warming, ugly wind-farms and out-of-town shopping centres. He wants to make the land safe for cabbage beetles, dormice and skylarks. And now this righteous champion of rural bio-diversity has acted on behalf of another endangered species: the motor-boats of Windermere.

Their preferred habitat — a narrow, 10-mile stretch of water — has long been threatened by the combined forces of the Countryside Commission, the National Trust, the Lake District National Park Authority, and from any number of residents and visitors who claim that the shriek of power-boats and jet-skis is detrimental to peace and quiet.

Last year, after a 13-week public inquiry, an independent inspector upheld a proposed speed limit of 10 mph.

He concluded that speedboats and waterskiing were incompatible with nearly all the other recreations on Windermere. But John Gummer has just overruled this recommendation, claiming that it would "deny a substantial number of users the full use of an important stretch of water over which there is a public right to navigation". This minority right clearly outweighed the right of millions of other visitors to enjoy those remnants of tranquillity and beauty the region still possesses.

Gummer's decision will no doubt bring joy and comfort to those other tribes of leisure-seekers, from trail-bikers to jeep-drivers, for whom no visit to the countryside is complete without a straining engine and maximum disruption of the landscape. Four-wheel-drive enthusiasts, for example, have endured mounting criticism from walkers, who complain that convoys of belching jeeps are not only unpleasant to the senses, but ruinous to the land, reducing green lanes to rutted quagmires. In a Which? report last year, all of Britain's national parks said they had suffered damage from these vehicles. "There are some parts of the park that look like the Somme," said a rights-of-way manager in the North York Moors.

But 4WD drivers know their rights. They have a

right to make verdant tracks look like the Somme. If a remote, grassy path was once open for "vehicular use" — for example, by horse-drawn carts or chariots, then it is also at the mercy of their Cockerels and Range Rovers. In Hampshire, the fact that a lane was used by vehicles in the Napoleonic Wars, now makes it available for 4WD pulverisation.

Among the iron-age forts and neolithic burial chambers in the Pembrokeshire Coast national park, off-road drivers claimed a right to erode another track, on the basis that it had been a Roman road. They were only banned after a public inquiry exposed these claims to vehicular antiquity as an 18th-century fraud. A relieved member of the Welsh Ramblers Association said the jeeps had made "quiet enjoyment" impossible.

But quiet enjoyment is not a right, is it? Not like the right to trail-bike, or race speed-boats, or plough five-foot ruts into a public highway. Last year, Lord Norrie inserted an amendment to the Environment Bill, stating that one purpose of the national parks was to promote "opportunities for the quiet enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of those places by the public".

But the word "quiet" was expunged, at Gummer's

behest. After all, it was argued, who is to say that quiet enjoyment is what the parks, or for that matter, the countryside, is for?

Those killjoys from the Ramblers Association may think the countryside is good for nothing but carting socks about in rucksacks, but the Tourist Board regards it as an industrial resource, while the Sports Council prefers to see it as a giant sports centre, or playground, in which a witless desire to be whizzed around at high speed is considered quite as ennobling as physical activity. Borrowing the language of the early rambles, each group talks about its right to do as it pleases on the land. As the information officer of the noise-polluters' lobby, the Land Access and Recreation Association, said recently: "Democracy isn't just about the majority rules OK." Well, actually that is what democracy means: it means the people as a whole

Golfers hate crusties. Water-skiers prefer Windermere. Ramblers like to start from a car-park

decide, rather than any class or interest group.

For all the conflict about what constitutes enjoyment, there exists a broad consensus that the countryside should be a peaceful, unspoiled place, and a firm idea of the differences between the ideally rustic (quiet) and the grimly urban (noisy); between essential bucolic noises (tractors, sheep) and spurious noise (jeeps, motorbikes).

If not, why do polls of city dwellers repeatedly reveal

their longing to live in cottages in the countryside?

Naturally, people are inconsistent. Golfers hate crusties. Trail-bikers want to judder through unspoilt country, far from smelly roads. Water-skiers prefer Windermere to a gravel pit. Ramblers like to start from a car-park, not a messy park 'n' ride scheme.

Two years ago, the Council for the Protection of Rural England warned that the leisure industry presented as much threat to rural Britain as housing, intensive farming and shopping centres. Gummer's latest indulgence of the leisure industry can only confirm its fears. But there is room for compromise. Noisy sports need not be banned entirely, merely confined to designated areas, where the landscape has nothing to lose, or the residents positively applaud the invasion. With his admiration for water sports, Gummer could only welcome a full-size racing-lake beside his own home, near Debenham in Suffolk. The speed-boaters could not begrudge a 4WD drivers their track around the banks, while the additional blasts from an aerodrome and shooting range would be rendered virtually inaudible in the happy roar from a newly-built holiday village, Selwyn Park. As for permission: if an ancient track can become a 4WD highway, Gummer's historic pond can surely be extended into a speed-boating centre. Anyway, isn't he Secretary of State for the Environment? As he showed this week, overriding common decency is part of the job-description.

Target-men with nowhere to hide



David McKie

ONE AFTERNOON in the spring of 1987 I was walking down Park Row, Leeds, with a copy of the Yorkshire Evening Post in my hand, when a man came up and said: "Has he gone?" He didn't say who he meant; he didn't need to. What had happened? The death of a king? No, something far more important: our centre-forward, John Charles, was on his way to Juventus for a world record £55,000.

Charles signed for Leeds on his 16th birthday, played his first game, at centre-half, at 17, and was capped by Wales 18. There wasn't much doubt on the Leeds Road terraces that we had before us, fortnightly, one of the greatest centre-halves in the world. And then, because United weren't scoring goals, they switched him to centre-forward. He proceeded to score 42 goals in a season (1953-54), a record which still stands. This was only the second division, but that didn't diminish our pride in him. And I'm sure that the sense of mourning which settled over the city when Juventus finally came for him could never have been the same had he never played centre-forward.

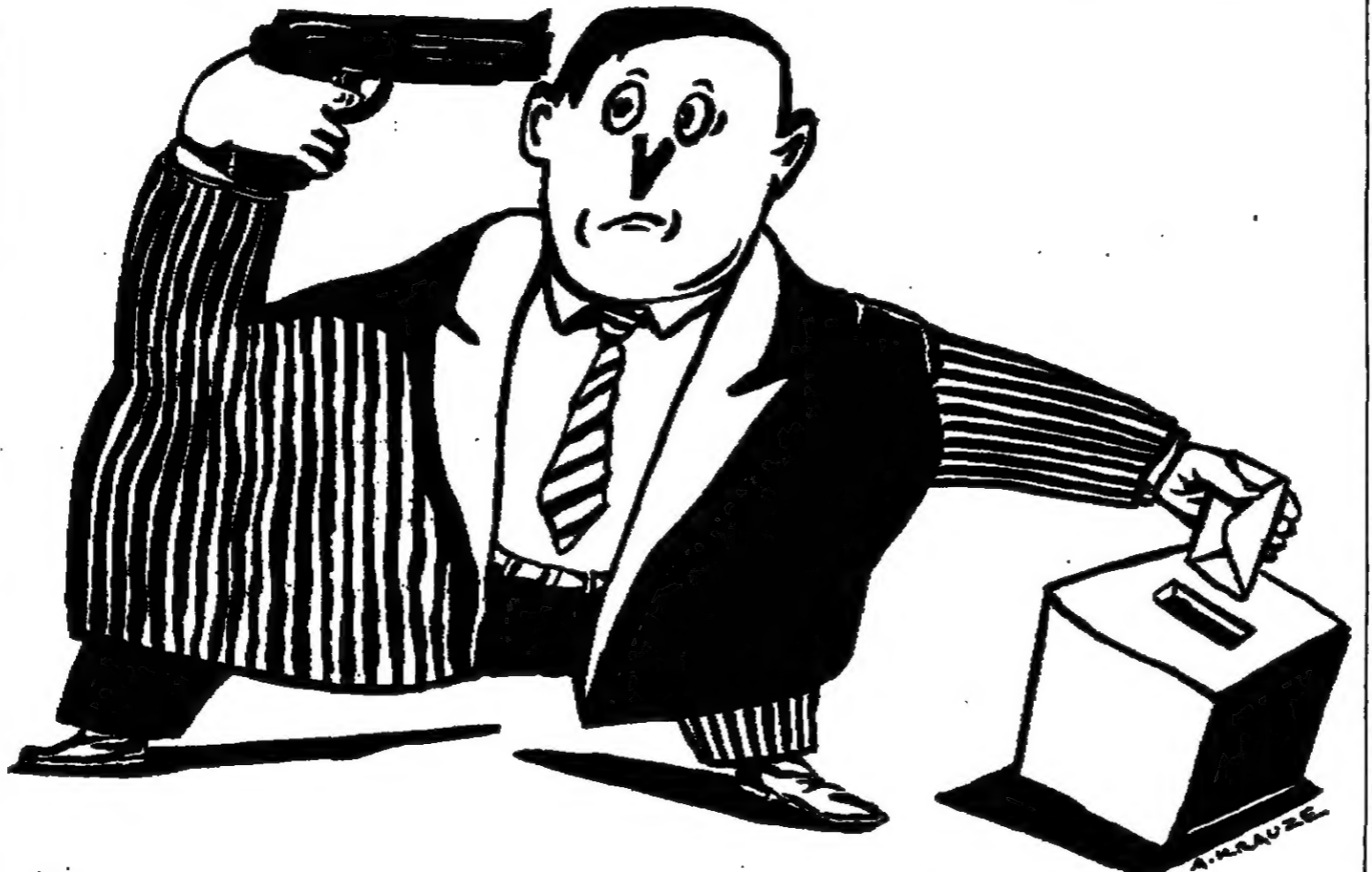
I thought of John Charles, who would, I suppose, have been paid the maximum Football League wage of £20 a week, when Alan Shearer left Blackburn for Newcastle for a record £15 million. He'll be earning more in a year than many earn in a lifetime: a reported £2 million a year — more than £5, on the Sun's arithmetic, for every second he spends on the pitch. That couldn't happen, I think, to any player who wasn't a centre-forward. That is nothing new. The very first £500 transfer, from Sheffield United to Sunderland (1904), and the first £1,000 payment, by Middlesbrough to Sunderland (1905), both involved the same player: Alf Common — not, strictly speaking, a centre-forward, since he wore number 8 rather than number 9 — but a goal-scorer, who Middlesbrough bet (as it turned out, correctly) would save them from relegation. The first £5,000 deal, in 1922, took Syd Puddefoot from West Ham to (amazingly) Falkirk. This was a famous goalscorer, so revered by West Ham supporters that within weeks of his departure, the sort of rumour began to circulate which had once attached itself to King Arthur and Emperor Charlemagne. He is not dead, but sleepeth: one day he

will return. As he did; but the magic was not what it had been, since Syd was now 37. That centre-forward should enjoy such prominence is hardly surprising. It's the goalscorers who more than anyone else draw the crowds and get the whole stadium on its feet with that great triumphant "yee!" which, except for goalkeepers in penalty shoot-outs, rarely comes the way of others. Centre-forwards, like few other players, can create the feel-good factor not just in a club but across a city or town. It doesn't take great international players to do it. Wally Ardron in the late 1940s put a glow in the heart of Rotherham, as Terry Ely did into Peterborough in the 60s or Steve Bull into Wolverhampton in the 80s.

Clubs who buy centre-forwards like Shearer are looking to buy esteem as well as success. When people rail against the rewards that the fat cats of industry, especially privatised industry, choose to award themselves, Tory backbench MPs often ask why it is that these people are pilloried, while far bigger earnings in sport and entertainment are taken for granted. Why, they ask, is Cedric Brown's £400,000 a year at British Gas (before he left with a £4 million pension package) judged "obscene", when Alan Shearer's £5 million goes uncondemned except from paupers of Starbuck-like austerity?

THERE'S one obvious reason: centre-forwards are publicly and continuously accountable in a way entirely beyond the experience of even the most beleaguered executive, or for that matter, politician. If they don't deliver, the whole world knows. There is nowhere to hide. A centre-forward who is not scoring goals may blame it for a while on supply-side problems, such as wingers who can't cross the ball, but once his magic has gone, he will not be forgiven. Every Saturday afternoon, for a centre-forward, is a time of trial. A water-board chairman may be vilified in the press, but he doesn't have to perform in front of a crowd of drought-stricken consumers, standpipes in hand.

After five years in Italy, John Charles, amidst rapturous public acclaim, returned to Elland Road on a £53,000 transfer. He lasted 11 games. Something most fans blamed the past; in those days still an alien concept in Leeds — had slowed him, and blunted his edge. At first the crowd was perplexed. Then it grew sullen. Then it began to turn hostile. There were even boos from the terraces. Somehow Leeds persuaded Roma to pay £70,000 to take him back to Italy. Had you told them in Park Row then that the King was going, they might even have said: good riddance.



Gun lobby on the run

Despite his defeat in committee, Chris Mullin is confident Parliament will eventually ban handguns and toughen controls on other types of weapons

IN THE last four years just two issues have split the Home Affairs select committee rigidly along party lines. The funding of political parties was the first — for reasons we can all guess. Yesterday's report on guns is the other.

As our inquiry progressed it became clear that there is a considerable overlap between the gun lobby and the Conservative Party. Given the massive vested interests involved, it was never very likely that the Tories could take on the gun lobby — despite Dunblane. We can be disappointed, but we should not be surprised.

Several points struck me forcibly during the course of our inquiry. First, the quantity of legally-held handguns, rifles and shotguns in private ownership is truly astonishing — 1.9 million. And that does not include several million airguns — which are responsible for a lot of low-level crime and for which no licence is required. Second, that licences are granted to just about everybody who applies. Last year only 1 per cent of applications were refused. In addition, 95 per cent of applications for renewals were rejected. Finally, there is no escape from the central fact that the weapons used by Thomas Hamilton at Dunblane were all legally held.

The weapons used by Thomas Hamilton at Dunblane were all legally held. So were the weapons used by Michael Ryan at Hungerford. So were those used recently in Tasmania

should be allowed to store handguns at home. The answer, with certain obvious exceptions, surely has to be "no". The most compelling evidence we received — and certainly that which carried most weight with Labour members — came from the Police Federation. The police were unequivocal: "No amount of further amendments to firearms-legislation, short of an outright ban on handguns, will ensure that all steps have been taken to prevent another atrocity." That is the nettle that has to be grasped and the Labour

members have grasped it. We have no desire to appear vindictive towards the shooting fraternity. We recognise that a lot of decent people derive innocent pleasure from sports such as target-shooting. Where it can be demonstrated that weapons can be centrally stored in a secure locations we have no objection. We emphasise, however, that the onus will be on shooters to demonstrate that their weapons can be safely stored. Faced with a choice between public safety and the convenience of shooters, public safety must be paramount. It has been argued that most weapons used for criminal purposes — though not of course those used by Thomas Hamilton — are held illegally. This is certainly true. No one is claiming that a ban on handguns is a panacea. All we are saying is that it will significantly reduce the possi-

ble, they require no licence. There is, therefore, no legitimate on who may own one. I believe that airguns should be brought within the licensing system. A minimum age limit should be imposed. There is also a strong case for licences not to be granted in urban areas. Bringing airguns within the licensing regime will, of course, be a large task, but let me one argue it will cost too much. On the contrary, it is ought to be self-financing. Who knows, it might even make a small profit.

What happens next is anyone's guess. Lord Cullen holds the key. If he were to recommend a ban on handguns, it would be politically impossible for the Government to avoid the issue. No doubt the Government would be much wailing and gnashing of teeth from the vested interests and their friends within the Tory Party. Probably there would have to be a free vote, but one way or the other it would go through.

If Lord Cullen comes down against a ban and in favour of tinkering with the existing system, the Government would still face difficulty. Any legislation on gun control is bound to be amended by the Opposition. Any amendment calling for a ban on handguns is bound to attract the support of some Conservatives, their minds no doubt concentrated by the proximity of a general election. No one should underestimate the power of the gun lobby or its influence within the Conservative Party. All the same, we have them on the run.

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Finance Guardian

Electrical storms break out

Grid is locked in futile prices row



Power politics... Professor Littlechild delivers a shocker to the National Grid PHOTOGRAPH GARRY WEAVER

'Streetwise' Littlechild pulls the plug on National Grid's glory days

Chris Barrie
Business Correspondent

THE National Grid is likely to accept the electricity watchdog's proposals for swingeing price cuts without a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, analysts forecast last night. Although most City forecasters were caught out by the severity of Professor Stephen Littlechild's proposals for new controls on transmission prices, analysts said the company would face an uphill battle to persuade the MMC to overturn the ideas. One analyst said the methodology employed by the regulator and his staff at Ofwat "stacks up well" and it would be "unwise" to challenge it at the MMC. The Grid warned investors that Ofwat's proposals would see transmission profits fall sharply in 1997/1998, falling further in real terms thereafter "with a consequential impact on dividend policy". SBC Warburg said dividend growth would now be "difficult to achieve". But the regulator's decision to allow cuts in expected investments in free cash for shareholders. The share price was "about right" at 185p, 10.5p up on the day and just 5p up on the 12-month low.

Utilities chiefs on attack

Privatised industry chiefs have never loved tough regulators. **'It is my belief that the director general's proposals present a highly dangerous new form of regulation, with broad and undefined discretionary, or absolute, powers vested in a single individual'** — Sir Iain Vallance, BT chairman, on Don Cruickshank of Ofwat **'One of the biggest smash-and-grab raids ever'** — Phillip Rogerson, British Gas deputy chairman, on Ofgas's proposed pipeline curbs **'His proposals are ill-founded and unprecedentedly harsh'** — National Grid chief executive David Jones yesterday on Professor Littlechild

One analyst said the City had underestimated the scale of the price curbs because "we didn't trust Stephen Littlechild not to bottle it". He said the controls were the last chance before the election for the regulator to "get the type of headlines that other regulators have enjoyed". In setting his controls, Prof Littlechild chose to set aside submissions from the Grid on future capital expenditure, assessments of the transmission business's asset value and operating costs. He said he had examined the last price control and the claims made by the Grid at the time. The Grid argues that operating costs could be cut by 1.5 per cent a year in future. But Prof Littlechild said the Grid had "consistently performed better" than past projections. Accordingly, he set his controls on the basis that the Grid would cut costs by between 4 per cent and 6 per cent, about half the rate achieved in the past. Prof Littlechild took a similarly harsh line on capital spending. Pointing to the Grid's spend of £190 million last year, against a projected £420 million, the regulator refused to allow the £1.1 billion allowance over four years sought by the Grid, cutting it to £700 million.

And he chose to value the group's transmission business at some £4 billion, not the £4.6 billion suggested by the Grid.

The Grid will now attempt to persuade the regulator to soften his stance on the controls — which take effect from April next year — during the consultation period which ends on September 10.

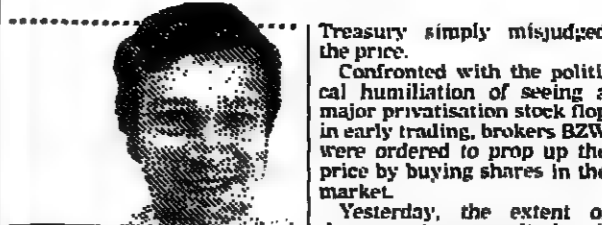
David Jones, the Grid's chief executive, condemned the price caps as "ill-founded and unprecedentedly harsh". He said: "They would have the effect of destroying value for shareholders and impairing the efficiency of the transmission system in the longer term". The electricity consumer committees welcomed the regulator's approach to the review. Ken Prior, acting chairman of the committees' chairmen, said: "We are seeing a regulator who is more streetwise".

Buxted Chicken, based at Flixton, Suffolk, yesterday became the first large water user to be allowed by Ofwat, the industry regulator, to change its water supplier — from Essex and Suffolk Water to Anglian Water.

Market shuns nuclear shares

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

FRESH controversy looms over the Government's £1.3 billion stock market sale of Britain's nuclear industry after its City banking advisers admitted yesterday that more than 12 per cent of shares in British Energy are still in public hands because of the failure of July's mass flotation of the entire company. The surplus share stake — which is valued at nearly £86 million — was built up by bankers BZW in an attempt to shore up the company's market price immediately after flotation. As is usual during a major flotation, brokers prepare to exercise this so-called "green shoe" option if newly-traded shares fall below the price at which the flotation offer was sold. But, despite heavy buying, shares were still trading at 49 under the 105p flotation price when the deadline for the "share stabilisation" programme closed yesterday. As a result, the Government has been left with 85.9 million shares in the company, representing around 12.2 per cent of its share capital. A small fraction of this represents shares set aside for bonus share allotments. BZW refused to give details but indicated that the bulk of the holding represented shares bought during the abortive price stabilisation programme. Treasury advisers said yesterday that the holding would remain in public hands for the foreseeable future. However the size of the surplus share tranche casts further doubt over this, the most controversial of all the Government's privatisation issues. Nor does it appear to have been any more convinced by the National Grid's estimates of some £1.1 billion of capital spending over the next four years. The National Grid is a monopoly. Prof Littlechild's role is to ensure it operates as efficiently as possible. That must include allowing the company sufficient resources to invest and operate effectively and safely and to provide a return to shareholders. He believes the new regime would allow for that. He should stick to his guns. If the company reckons it has a compelling case against him, it can always take it to the Monopolies Commission. Don't hold your breath.



Edited by Mark Miner

PROFESSOR Stephen Littlechild, the director general of electricity supply, has, on occasion, walked unwittingly into controversy. He cannot, however, have been unduly surprised by the howls of outrage from the National Grid over his proposals for changes to its pricing regime. The proposals, rather tougher than the City had been expecting judging by the share price reaction, were attacked as "ill founded" by the National Grid's chief executive David Jones. The trade union, Unison, also expressed concern about the impact of the proposed cuts on an already reduced workforce. Much is at stake. Though domestic consumers are only likely to benefit by about 25 a year, the proposed changes could cost National Grid more than £1 billion over the next four years. Professor Littlechild has shown a healthy scepticism about claims made to him by the company. Operating costs have fallen by an average of 10 per cent a year in real terms of late. Hardly surprising then that the Ofwat director general reckons the company can do better than its own forecast for future reductions of 1.5 per cent a year. Nor does he appear to have been any more convinced by the National Grid's estimates of some £1.1 billion of capital spending over the next four years. The National Grid is a monopoly. Prof Littlechild's role is to ensure it operates as efficiently as possible. That must include allowing the company sufficient resources to invest and operate effectively and safely and to provide a return to shareholders. He believes the new regime would allow for that. He should stick to his guns. If the company reckons it has a compelling case against him, it can always take it to the Monopolies Commission. Don't hold your breath.

Mutual comfort

THOSE building societies determined to cling on to their mutual status will find much to comfort them in the Mori poll findings carried out for the Bradford & Bingley. Less than one in five of us, according to the poll, supports the idea of building societies converting to banks while, in the face of a hostile takeover bid, members would want so much money to back the move, all but the most prodigal predator would be deterred. On such a "crazy" scale of values, the B&B reckons it would command a £3.3 billion price tag. Most of us, it seems, are long-termists, preferring better mortgage and saving rates to hand-outs of cash or shares. But what about the Abbey National's acquisition of the National & Provincial and Lloyds purchase of the Cheltenham & Gloucester, where members received, respectively, pay-outs worth, on average, £1,400 and £2,900? They were different, according to the B&B, because both deals were agreed. The lesson it clearly wants to draw is that provided management is firm against both conversion and hostile takeover, then the principle of mutuality can be preserved. Up to a point. The poll also shows that though 18 per cent are in favour of conversion, only 32 per cent are against. Most of the rest are neutral. Psychologists reckon that there is often a reluctance to express an opinion against the perceived climate of opinion — the so-called spiral of silence theory. Building societies are perceived to be good things which might make people reluctant to admit they would swap membership for money. Support for change might be greater than it looks.

Atomic pile

IT IS ironic that after all the hype surrounding the sale of the nuclear industry, it now appears that British Energy has not been fully privatised at all. Far from having off the business to City investors, the Government's own bankers admit that more than 12 per cent of the company still remains in public hands. The Treasury seems to have been dumped with the unwanted stock, despite spending £50 million on the City advisers involved in arranging the deal. It now appears that, although the valuation of the company was trimmed well below initial estimates, the

Dixons reveals boss's 30pc rise

Ian King

SIR Stanley Kalms, chairman of Dixons and scourge of corporate governance, enjoyed a 29 per cent increase in total pay and benefits last year to £985,000, it emerged yesterday. The figure, disclosed in the company's annual report, compares with last year's sums in which Sir Stanley waived the extra £100,000 to which he was entitled. It was also revealed that in May this year Sir Stanley exercised 200,000 share options at 183p a time — against the prevailing market price of 42p a share. Sir Stanley, a well-known supporter of the Conservative Party, still holds 659,084 shares which on yesterday's options, which on yesterday's closing share price of 507p (down 3p), gives him a paper profit of some £1.1 million. The annual report also shows that among Sir Stanley's fellow directors, deputy chairman Mark Souhami collected £130,560 from share options, while group chief executive John Clare picked up £295,558 and corporate finance director Robert Schragger scooped £188,000. Meanwhile, Matthew Clark, one of Britain's leading cider makers, admitted that one of its biggest institutional investors

Problems undermine De Beers' glittering half-year profits

Dan Atkinson

GATHERING storm clouds overshadowed bumper half-year profits from diamond conglomerate De Beers yesterday. The sliding value of the rand and renewed uncertainty over a critical trade deal with the Russian government, combined to cast doubt on the survival of the company's worldwide marketing cartel. Director Gary Ralfe said he had cancelled his holiday two weeks ago to fly to Moscow for emergency talks and to protest at a jump in the number of Russian stones leaking on to world markets, undermining the De Beers sales system.

Meanwhile, De Beers, the world's largest diamond producer, is coping with the after-shocks of the walkout from the cartel in June of the world's biggest diamond mine, Argyle in Australia. The mine had complained that De Beers's prices and quotas were tilted against smaller gems of the Argyle type, yesterday De Beers said it was trying to help the Indian cutting industry, unsettled by the walkout, to adjust. De Beers chairman, Julian Ogilvie Thompson, speaking from Johannesburg, accused Argyle of "rather a selfish act". Should other producers

walk out of De Beers's Central Selling Organisation (CSO), he said, "things really wouldn't work at all". Argyle accounted for just 6 per cent of the CSO's rough-diamond intake, even without it, the CSO still controls about 80 per cent of gemstone sales. Far more serious is the threat of a breakdown in the detailed discussions with Russia, the second-largest producer in the world. An outline bargain struck in February seemed to have averted the threat of a Russian walkout from the CSO, but the presidential elections and political infighting in Moscow have delayed final agreement. A gun-to-the-Tass report on June 24 suggested, contrary to impressions received from De Beers, that months of hard bargaining lay ahead.

Russian gem leakages, which averaged more than \$62 million (£41.3 million) a month during 1993 and 1994, dropped to an average \$12.3 million in March and April. But in June, leakages rose to perhaps \$50 million. Mr Ralfe said the August shutdown of cutting centres in Antwerp and Tel Aviv made it hard to judge present leakage levels. De Beers's attributable earnings rose 18 per cent in US dollar terms in the six months to June 30, well ahead of analysts' expectations.

Alan Shearer — who recently broke the world record when he signed for Newcastle United in a £15 million deal — the transfer of 46 year-old Mr Launders immediately excited the pundits. In true Jimmy Hill mode, analysts said Manchester United's loss was Leeds United's gain. Mr Launders, shire club recently snapped up by Caspian Group for £16 million. Like England striker

Anbrey Carroll, of Manchester-based stockbroker Siddle, said: "Robin has been instrumental behind Manchester United's success off the field and he's a top-rated finance director. It's a major coup for Leeds United and a bit of a blow for Manchester United." Caspian itself, eschewing time-honoured idioms like "the boy will slot in well", restricted itself to a brief stock exchange announcement. But spokesman

James Henderson, donning the traditional camel hair coat and cigar, added: "This is exceptionally good news for Leeds and a real coup. Launders is widely regarded as the man who turned around Manchester United's financial performance." Although the news had been rumoured for a fortnight, the stock market agreed, marking Manchester United shares down 1p to 465p.

Well, it's a coup for Leeds getting Launders, but the Reds lose out

Ian King

THE transfer merry-go-round in English football yesterday waltzed into the boardroom for the first time when Robin Launders, Manchester United's finance director, agreed to become chief executive of Leeds United, the Yorkshire club recently snapped up by Caspian Group for £16 million. Like England striker

James Henderson, donning the traditional camel hair coat and cigar, added: "This is exceptionally good news for Leeds and a real coup. Launders is widely regarded as the man who turned around Manchester United's financial performance." Although the news had been rumoured for a fortnight, the stock market agreed, marking Manchester United shares down 1p to 465p.

BOC queasy in health business

Ian King

MORE than £202 million was slashed from the market value of BOC, the industrial gases and healthcare group, after it warned yesterday that its health-care business was still suffering in harsh US markets. BOC shares collapsed 42p, to 85p, after warning that Forane, its inhaled anaesthetic product, was continuing to shed market share after losing its US patent. As a result, profits at BOC's healthcare business fell 27 per cent. Despite this, group pre-tax profits in the third quarter rose 11 per cent to £237.3 million.

Danny Rosenkranz, BOC's chief executive, said sales of Forane whose main rivals include products from drugs group Medeva — had increased outside the US, but that price competition had still dented profits. He added: "We have taken a hell of a year, more than we forecast." But Mr Rosenkranz, who said he expected Forane to go on suffering from price pressures into next year, insisted BOC would stick with the business — which many analysts believe is being groomed for sale — for now. "We have made the decision, at least for the medium term, that we are going to hang on to this business. We fully expect a difficult 18 months ahead, and during that time we will assess it."

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.83	France 7.56	Italy 2.904	Singapore 2.14
Austria 15.51	Germany 2.200	Malta 0.5355	South Africa 8.82
Belgium 45.72	Greece 358.00	Netherlands 2.4850	Spain 169.00
Canada 2.0750	Hong Kong 11.08	New Zealand 2.2050	Sweden 10.15
Cyprus 0.6950	India 55.24	Norway 9.98	Switzerland 1.80
Denmark 8.65	Ireland 0.5325	Portugal 229.50	Turkey 128.175
Finland 8.9250	Israel 4.87	Saudi Arabia 5.79	USA 1.5150

Sourced by Reuters Bank including Indian rupee and Turkish Lira.

BMW calms fears over Rover losses

Chris Barrie
Business Correspondent

FALLING share prices and mounting unease forced BMW to act yesterday over reports that its Rover subsidiary was likely to drag down profits at the German car company for years ahead.

As BMW shares fell sharply in volatile market conditions to DM336 (€336) in Frankfurt, a spokesman admitted that Rover would continue to lose money until the end of the decade, but said losses were unlikely to exceed last year's level of DM336 million.

The spokesman said that while losses would fall this year, the BMW board did not expect Rover to make a financial contribution to the group before the end of the decade because of the need for heavy investment in facilities and new cars.

The company was responding to a report from Salomon Brothers warning that Rover lagged far behind European competitors in profitability. The UK company was emerging as the European volume car company "with the most work to accomplish to reach industry standards."

According to Salomon's analyst, John Lawson, Rover needs "a radical transition from its parent if it is to emerge as a 'premium' car maker". He said Rover was a short and medium-term burden on BMW, leaving the BMW shares facing a 15 per cent fall before the costs and risks of the Rover acquisition were absorbed.

Mr Lawson pointed out that Rover's strategy of boosting exports at the expense of home sales could take a toll on profits in the short term.

He said Rover had to rationalise its product range — it has eight platforms on which it builds cars and four-wheel-drive vehicles — if it was to improve "some of the worst production economics in the industry".

The model line-up represented years of underinvestment and ownership changes. BMW bought Rover from British Aerospace for £800 million in March 1994. The German firm said yesterday that the price was "fair" for a company with a DM16 billion turnover, and that it was equally fair that it should now have to invest in the UK firm. Investment was running at between 7 and 8 per cent of turnover, compared with 3 per cent under Rover's previous owners.

The spokesman said Rover's DM336 million loss was equivalent to a profit before tax and interest of £90 million by UK accounting standards.

Adding to BMW and Rover's discomfort is the publication this month of a detailed account in Car magazine of unrest among BMW managers at Rover's performance.

The report suggests Rover has been struggling to develop a new Mini, and that German managers will outnumber English managers on Rover's key strategy committee.

● The French car manufacturer, Renault, reported a slide in first-half sales of 2.3 per cent to \$4,055 billion francs (£2 billion). At Volkswagen, interim profits outgrew sales, but the shares slipped on profit-taking after the news. Group income from ordinary activities rose 45 per cent to DM891 million from DM616 million in the same period last year.



Trading places... Dealers on Liffe's hectic floor are creating a greater volume of contracts than their once patronising rivals at the Stock Exchange

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID BILLOT

Brash, vulgar — and very liquid

In only 14 years, Liffe has become Europe's leading futures and options exchange, writes IAN KING

LIFFE, the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange, differs from its obscure cousin because it is the beloved of lay — or desperate — TV producers. It's where those screaming, arm-waving men dressed in striped jackets ply their trade, and as such are instantly recognisable to millions of viewers.

However, Liffe deserves to be taken more seriously than that, or than many of the old school fix brigade of the City give it credit for.

They still look down on Liffe, regarding the exchange and its demure as nouveau and rather vulgar, but in the 14 years since it opened, it has established itself as Europe's number one futures and options exchange, and the third largest in the world.

In fact, in terms of numbers of trades, Liffe has overtaken the Stock Exchange which, famously rebuffed Liffe's chairman, Jack Wigglesworth, when he proposed a new futures market back in 1980 — and seems to break its own record every month.

Expressed in monetary terms, Liffe's achievement is even more spectacular. Average daily turnover in 1995 was £128.4 billion, and if there was any doubt it would be higher this year, the number for July — traditionally a quiet month — was £146.5 billion.

One of the most palpable signs of the exchange's success is its forthcoming merger, as the dominant partner, with the London Commodities Exchange, itself one of the premier commodities exchanges outside the US.

SO IT IS clear that Liffe's 22,000 square-foot dealing floor at its Cannon Bridge home (only opened in 1991) will have to be expanded in order to accommodate the extra business. And a new purpose-built headquarters is likely to be opened early in the next century.

As a temporary expedient, Liffe is leasing the old Stock Exchange headquarters in the City's Threadneedle Street, neatly turning the tables on

the mob in the old Exchange who looked down their noses at their newer, brasher rivals all those years ago.

What has made Liffe so successful? The answer, simply, is liquidity. As markets have become more sophisticated over the past decade, so institutions have sought better facilities to cover or "hedge" their positions, allowing them to minimise losses and maximise profits.

To minimise risk, a high level of liquidity — that is, the ease with which investors can move in and out of investment opportunities — is essential, and futures and options are central to increasing liquidity.

As the importance of futures and options has grown, during the last 10 years, so the number of institutions using them has increased.

On any given day at Liffe, a visitor can now see banks, institutions, corporate treasurers and even private investors trading in futures and options. They are there to deal in one of the most di-

verse ranges of products available anywhere in the world — including interest-rate futures and options denominated in numerous currencies, options on most of the shares traded on the FTSE-100, and futures and options contracts on the FTSE-100 itself.

Essentially, these players are using such products for three purposes: to hedge, or protect a position against adverse price movements in the future; to trade or profit from future price movements; or to arbitrage, the practice of profiting from the same product (like a share) having a different price in different markets.

IN THE global market, the importance of being able to trade, hedge or arbitrage at any time of day is now crucial. With London filling the gap between the Tokyo and New York markets, Liffe has become probably the most important of all the London exchanges — a fact readily recognised by its 200 or so member firms, of

which almost three-quarters are foreign-owned, and which include most of the world's best-known financial institutions.

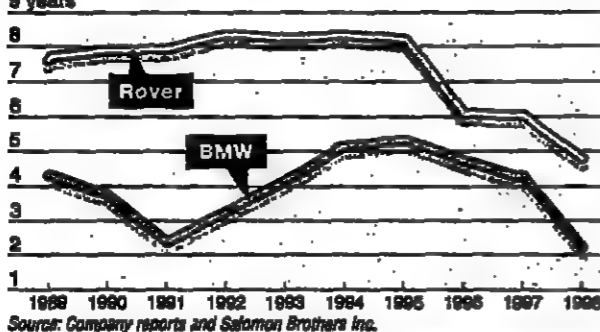
Liffe's importance in a European context is also highly significant. Over recent years, the exchange has emerged as the leading venue on which to trade products such as futures and options covering German, Japanese and Italian bonds — much to the chagrin of rival European futures exchanges, such as the Mifx in Paris or the DFE in Frankfurt.

But Liffe is not so arrogant as to assume it will enjoy such a competitive advantage simply by resting on its laurels. For instance, it recently made provisions in the contracts for the March 1999 delivery of three-month euro-mark and short sterling futures, allowing for settlement against euro interest rates in the event of either currency participating fully in EMU.

Tomorrow Volatile mix at the Petroleum Exchange

Got a new motor?

BMW and Rover - average product ages 9 years



Source: Company reports and Salomon Brothers Inc.

The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

available all over Europe

Banks discover price of buying up mutual trust

Richard Miles

JUST 210 would be enough to persuade all most one in 10 building society customers to accept a hostile bid from a bank, according to a Mori survey for Bradford & Bingley published yesterday.

However, predator banks would have to stump up far higher sums to secure majority approval. The survey indicates that a cash bonus of at least £1,500 would be necessary to woo 52 per cent of building society members.

B&B, one of the few top 10 building societies still committed to mutualism, argued that the survey shows how little appetite there is among customers for hostile takeovers.

This is despite two recent deals where building societies have succumbed to offers from banks. In August last year, Cheltenham & Gloucester became part of the Lloyds TSB group, while earlier this month National & Provincial was absorbed by Abbey National.

N&P's 2.5 million members received bonuses averaging £1,400, while the 800,000 C&G customers were paid an average of £2,500.

John Wriglesworth, B&B's director of strategy and communications, said: "Not only do the vast majority of people reject the idea of hostile takeovers, but some people now demand very high sums of money to be persuaded to vote in favour."

Mr Wriglesworth estimated that banks would have to pay out £3,390 per member to obtain the 75 per cent majority required by statute to endorse a

takeover bid, which, he argued, put B&B beyond the reach of most predators.

By remaining mutual, he added, B&B could continue to offer its customers mortgages and savings accounts with rates far superior to their nearest rivals. This strategy will reduce B&B's profit figures, due later this month, by about 250 million.

The Mori survey, based on interviews with 2,000 people across the UK, also reveals that more people expect than favour the conversion of building societies to banks, with only 18 per cent positively for such plans. However, the largest group — 43 per cent — were neutral on the issue.

Unsurprisingly, where no bonus is on offer, just 10 per cent of people would support conversion to a bank.

● Britannia Building Society, another supporter of mutualism, yesterday appointed a director of mutualism and marketing. Gerald Gregory will develop the society's mutualism strategy, which includes a loyalty scheme paying a cash bonus.

The offer

Amount of money needed to persuade customers to support a hostile takeover of their building society by a bank

Amount of money	% building society customers (cumulative)
£100	22
£1,000	52
£10,000	75
£100,000	82

News in brief

Halifax offer shield from negative equity

HALIFAX, the UK's largest mortgage lender, yesterday launched a scheme to protect new house buyers from negative equity. With the First Time Buyer Guarantee, if borrowers run into negative equity after five years but before ten years, and still want to move, Halifax will sell their homes and repay the mortgage in full.

In the scheme, property insurance is compulsory for ten years and borrowers must take a new mortgage with Halifax. The society will also carry out reinspections of the property every three years to confirm it is adequately maintained. — Richard Miles

10p in £ for Facia creditors

CREDITORS of the collapsed Facia shop-chain stand to get back an average payout of up to 10p in the pound, accountants KPMG said yesterday. A payout remained "highly likely" following the sale of some of the group's businesses as going concerns — but administrator Tony Thompson said he was unable to give a precise figure to unsecured creditors of the Sock Shop and Red or Dead chain, who are owed around £50 million.

The retail group, which is being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office, has filed no accounts since 1994. But Mr Thompson disclosed that the trading losses for the companies ran to £9 million for the first 16 weeks of 1996. — Patrick Donovan

Lucas set for Varsity merger

LUCAS yesterday won shareholder approval to buy Varsity for £2 billion (£1.3 billion) worth of stock, in a plan to create the world's second-biggest maker of automotive brake systems. The two car parts manufacturers said in May they would merge in a stock swap, to form a new company called Lucas Varsity. Shares of the new entity will begin trading on September 6 — provided that shareholders of Varsity approve the transaction, as they are to do on August 22. Shares of Lucas rose 2 pence to 235p in late London trading. In New York, Varsity shares were up ¼ at 49¢ in mid-morning trading. — Bloomberg

Insurance firms credit risk

THE credit stability of many of the UK's non-life insurance companies is at risk from their efforts to boost profits in the face of increasing competition, warned the international rating agency Moody's yesterday. Moody's said the rating of the companies had not been shaken by the huge underwriting losses suffered in recent years. But, it added, the companies had two main weaknesses: their expense ratios were high and they were often not charging policyholders enough while vying for market share. — Pauline Spryngel

Sedgwick denies Willis move

INTERNATIONAL insurance broker Sedgwick yesterday ruled out a merger with rival group Willis Coroon. Rumours of a possible tie-up between the two companies have been circulating, but Mr Riley said yesterday that Sedgwick was not interested in Willis. He was speaking as Sedgwick unveiled a flat set of half-year results, with pre-tax profits up 2 per cent at £84.1 million. — Pauline Spryngel

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Quick step... Danicethnightaway proves too sharp for her rivals at Bath yesterday

Salisbury card with guide to the form

A detailed racing card for Salisbury, listing various races such as the 1.45 Overcast (m), 2.14 Polish Warrior, 3.45 My Melody Partners, and 5.15 Age of Reality. Each race entry includes the race name, time, and a list of participating horses with their respective jockeys and odds.

Hamilton tonight

A racing card for Hamilton, listing races like the 1.45 N. L. Lester Memorial Handicap, 2.45 Amberley Colliers' Conditions Stakes, 3.15 H. L. Lester Memorial Handicap, 4.15 Sandown Handicap, and 5.15 Amberley Colliers' Conditions Stakes. Each entry provides details on the race and the horses involved.

Racing King's old-timer has last chuckle with win 14

CHUCKLESTONE, the old-timer who refused to draw his pension, won the 14th race of his career and eighth at Bath when battling back to take the BBC Radio Bristol Handicap yesterday. The 12-year-old displayed tremendous tenacity in clinging to the favourite Bold Classic and forcing his neck in front in the final few strides. It was a stirring performance by the gelding who was retired at one time but appeared to resent it so much that Jeff King decided to put him back into training. "He knows more about this game than I do," said King. "We retired him to the Northern Apprentice School but he kept on getting rid of the kids."

BHB seek cut in betting tax

A REDUCTION in general betting duty of 1.75 per cent, meaning a cut in tax for the punter of one per cent, is being sought by the British Horseracing Board in an endeavour to improve racing's finances. The BHB yesterday gave details of its submission to the Chancellor asking for a one per cent cut in punters' deductions to 9 per cent, in the hope of stimulating turnover, while suggesting that the remaining .75 per cent of an overall cut should be given to racing to boost prizemoney. Such a move could push total prizemoney to \$22 million compared to the \$29 million available this year to owners who contribute some \$175 million annually to racing, excluding the cost of purchasing horses. Lord Wakeham, chairman of the BHB, commented: "Years of over-taxation of betting and the consequent depressed contribution to racing have really taken their toll. Racing urgently needs a significant injection of funds to flourish and that it should do so is very much in the Government's interest too. The racing and betting industry, which employs nearly 100,000 people, generated tax revenue to the Government of more than £140 million last year. Britain is bottom of the international league in terms of the percentage of betting turnover returned to the industry - a mere 1.2 per cent."

Beverley

A racing card for Beverley, listing races such as the 2.00 North Avon, 2.30 Pension Fund, 3.00 The Derby, and 4.00 General Outlook. Each race entry includes the race name, time, and a list of participating horses with their respective jockeys and odds.

Sandown tonight

A racing card for Sandown, listing races like the 1.45 Sandown Handicap, 2.15 Sandown Handicap, 3.15 Sandown Handicap, 4.15 Sandown Handicap, and 5.15 Sandown Handicap. Each entry provides details on the race and the horses involved.

Results

A table listing the results of various races, including the names of the winning horses, their jockeys, and the odds. The results are organized by race number and time.

© Blunston for the first time - SALISBURY: 2.30 Florrie M. HAMILTON: 6.30 Sandown Girl; 8.30 Carmanora. BEVERLEY: 4.15 Running Free.

Chris Hawkins

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Advertisement for RACING.COM featuring a table with columns for race names, odds, and other details. The table lists various races and their corresponding betting information.



Waiting in the wings... Arsene Wenger, favourite to become Arsenal's manager

Soccer

Martin Thorpe reports that the former Barcelona coach prefers to stay out of management

Resting Cruyff leaves Wenger favourite for the Arsenal job

ARSENAL WENGER emerged yesterday as the favourite to replace Bruce Rioch as Arsenal's manager when Johan Cruyff made it clear he was not interested in the post. "He has told me he is not interested in a job at the moment," said Johan Deijen, Cruyff's spokesman. "He wants some time off from football." It is understood that Arsenal have already spoken to Wenger, who has indicated he would be interested in the vacancy. But the Highbury club will have to buy the English-speaking Frenchman out of the rest of his contract with the Japanese club Grampus Eight if they want him to start work before November. It is unclear whether

Arsenal will make an announcement this week, though they are under pressure to sign players before tomorrow, the deadline for eligibility for the first three rounds of the UEFA Cup. They will have to do a heavy selling job on Wenger to pacify their supporters, however. Although the 47-year-old former Monaco coach has long been admired by Arsenal, and considered for the job in the past, he is largely unknown in this country and his appointment will not appease the Highbury faithful — still angry at the way Rioch was treated — as Cruyff's arrival would be. Arsenal's board probably hope Wenger's credibility has been heightened enough in

coach Glenn Hoddle's invitation to him to be the FA's technical director, an offer he was considering. Hoddle was hugely influenced by Wenger when he played for Monaco as the Frenchman built a reputation for attacking football with sides staffed with stars such as Davorin Piskac and Weah. However, Wenger also knows the value of organisation, which Arsenal traditionalists will appreciate. And he is something of an Anglophile. He so likes English football that in the mid-Eighties he spent a French League winter break in Britain to watch games and training sessions. A former amateur player, he was coach of Cannes and Monaco before spending seven years at Monaco, where he

won the league title and the French Cup and reached the European Cup semi-final and the Cup Winners' Cup final. He was recently voted Manager of the Year in the Japanese J-League after turning around Grampus Eight's fortunes. Cruyff's rejection was no surprise. He had heart bypass surgery in 1993 and said on his departure from Barcelona in May: "I want to take a long break or retire altogether. I'm going to pay more attention to my family." More light has been thrown on the curious relationship between Rioch and Arsenal's vice-chairman David Dein in the signing of David. It was alleged yesterday by Arsenal's striker Ian Wright that Rioch's downfall was in part caused by

his transfer demands being unrealistic and some of his choices being unavailable. According to other sources, however, Rioch would check through agents to make sure a player was available before approaching Dein. And had Dein gone through the right channels and acted at the right time, Arsenal could have bought, at prices lower than their eventual transfer fees, players such as Vialli, Ravanelli, Lizarazu, Seedorf and Roberto Carlos. It is even understood that during Euro 96 Dein met Juventus's vice-president and was told that the Italian club, having bought several players as well as Ravanelli and Vialli to recoup some money, Dein was not interested.

The gap between Manchester's two clubs is as wide as ever, but Alan Ball senses a new togetherness in his squad. Michael Walker reports

Diminished City expect rapid return

IT IS often said that the difference between success and failure is a thin line. In relation to Manchester's clubs, however, the notion is either redundant or having a prolonged break. There now exists a growing chasm between City and United that was beautifully encapsulated on that final Sunday of last season when United were flying high on their way to the Premiership title — and the Double — while City were experiencing so much turbulence that when they landed they were in a different league. The suffering hardly ended there for City. Even before they begin life in the new Nationwide League on Friday night at home to Ipswich Town, they have been given a powerful reminder of their diminished status. On a Saturday when United played Ajax in a pre-season friendly that reeked of prestige and pedigree, City faced Scarborough, a fixture that reeked of something equally pungent, but it was not success. Last season's failure, however, gives City an opportunity to ease, if not erase, the pain. Like a racehorse dropped in class they should now start winning games. That is not an experience their fans have enjoyed often of late.



Georgian on their minds... Georgi Kinkladze does the honours for his adoring fans during Manchester City's open day at Maine Road yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEELE

It took Alan Ball's side 12 games and three months before they managed to last term a 1-0 win at home to Bolton in November. But City won only eight more matches and never climbed above 15th place. Still, they did not go down until the final minutes of the season, and then it was only because their defence was worse than Southampton's and Coventry's. "If only" could be City's motto, but it is too late for regrets about what might have been. Not that there was a downbeat mood at Maine Road yesterday. City's open day was packed like an Oasis concert at Knebworth. On what was ostensibly an occasion to launch a new mascot, "Moonchester", the ground was thronged with sky-blue pilgrims. An hour before the scheduled 2.30 start

there was a queue halfway around the stadium as thousands took the chance to get closer to their heroes. In fact at one stage they came too close. When the Georgian midfielder Georgi Kinkladze came out to stand by his sleek new sponsored — registration number GEO — the crowd surged forward causing Kinkladze to huff out across the pitch to

the safety of the tunnel. Children were running all over the stadium and the head groundsman Stan Gibson must have been concerned about the state of his pitch. Meanwhile his daughter, Janice Monk, was under heavy pressure in the club shop. "Sales are up on last year," she said. "City supporters are the best in the world; unbelievable."

It was a theme taken up by the chairman Francis Lee and manager Alan Ball. "We thought there'd be about three or four thousand," said Lee. "But we didn't expect them to ruin the pitch." Lee's jaunty form set the tone of the day. "I think we'll win more than we did last year," he said, before nominating the main dangers: "Birmingham and Wolves.

QPR will be difficult, and Bolton should do well. There is a band of about eight clubs for promotion and a band of eight scrapping not to go down. "Our form in the second half of last season was a top-10 finish, and a team of that ability should be able to hold their own. But it will be tough." Lee indicated that although the club had not bought so

much as a goldfish in the summer, money was available for players. "But not short-term buys." Besides which, Ball's opinion is that after the relatively good showing after Christmas "I feel obliged to give these lads a crack. There is money but I won't buy willy-nilly." He is probably not for sale anyway, but Ball senses that after last season's huge disap-

pointment his players are pointing alive. There is a togetherness there at the minute. Ball, an emotional character, admitted it had been a difficult summer both personally and professionally. "I don't want to go on too long about it but that's what we drive me on. We're going for it monster. I won't be able to live with myself if we don't."

Hoddle set to lose Gascoigne

PAUL GASCOIGNE has little chance of playing any part in England's first match under Glenn Hoddle, the World Cup qualifier in Moldova on September 1. The Rangers midfielder has an Achilles injury and has not appeared in any game since England's Euro 96 elimination by Germany almost two months ago. His return to Premier Division action looks likely to be on Saturday week, when Rangers meet Dundee United at Ibrox — 48 hours after Hoddle names his

England squad for Moldova. Gascoigne is not in Rangers' squad for tonight's Coca-Cola Cup tie at Clydebank, and the Ibrox manager Walter Smith said: "The injury is awkward. We are taking him slowly through training so there is no recurrence. It may be he could have a reserve outing and then be ready for the Dundee United match." Rangers' interest in the Italian Alessandro Orlando has ended. The defender is staying with Udinese.

Results

SCOTTISH COCA-COLA CUP

Second round

Blackburn 0-0 Livingston 11 (1) 25
 Hamilton 75 59
 Dundee 11 (1) 1
 Dumbarton 21 (1) 4
 Duffell 15, Scott 20, 16
 Craig 11, 57
 McFadden 17, 19
 Kilmarnock 0-0 1540
 Forth 0-0 1650
 Evans 40 (own goal)

WILKINSON SWIRE LEAGUE CUP

Second round: Ayr 0-0 Greenock 3
 Forth 0-0 1650
 Evans 40 (own goal)

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 Evans 40 (own goal)

Sport in brief

Chess
 Chris Ward, the No. 6 seed from Beckenham, scored his sixth win in seven games at the British championship in Nottingham when he defeated Andrew Martin by a 33-move checkmating attack yesterday, writes Leonard Barden. With four rounds left he is a point ahead of his nearest challenger, Aaron Sumnerscale, whom he has already beaten.

Boxing
 Japan's Keiji Yamaguchi retained his WBA junior-flyweight title in Osaka yesterday with a unanimous points decision over the former champion Carlos Murrillo of Panama.

Snooker
 Alex Higgins was eliminated for the fourth time in four tournaments this season when he was beaten by the world No. 20 Paul Snower at the qualifying school in Blackpool yesterday. The 47-year-old former world champion went down 5-1 in the fifth round of the £205,000 Regal Welsh Open at the North-breck Castle Hotel.

Golf
 Ivan Lendl, the former tennis world No. 1 who retired from the game two years ago with back problems, has been given a wild card into the Czech Open which starts tomorrow at Mariánské Lázně. The 36-year-old Czech-born American has a handicap of two.

Rugby Union

Cobner denies Quinell rift with Wales over match fees

WALE'S director of rugby Terry Cobner has denied suggestions that Scott Quinell will switch his allegiance to England in protest at the match fee offered to exiled Welsh internationals. Quinell's agent Mike Burton wants Wales to treat the 24-year-old forward, who has just returned to union with Richmond after two years at Wigan, as a special case by paying him £6,000 a match, rather than the £2,000 that exiled players have been offered, and allowing him to negotiate his win bonus. "There's no point in Scott committing himself to Wales for a less than lucrative fee while an England contract is available," said Burton. Cobner said Quinell had contracted 19 home-based internationals at a salary of £30,000 before homes to deter them from joining English clubs, but Quinell, Wales's No. 8 before his switch to league, has yet to break back into the squad and was not considered for the side that was announced yesterday for the match against the Barbarians in Cardiff on Saturday week. "I have been to Richmond and talked to all four Welsh players there (Craig Quinell, Adrian Davies and Andy Moore are the others)," said

Teamtalk

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England	38	Hudd. Town	32	Sheff. United	15
Scotland	39	Ipswich Town	19	Sheff. Wed.	14
Arsenal	16	Leeds United	03	Southampton	20
Aston Villa	11	Leicester City	38	Stoke City	30
Birmingham	34	Liverpool	04	Sunderland	27
Blackburn	21	Man. City	02	Tottenham Hot.	07
Bolton	36	Man. United	01	West Ham	12
Burnley	24	Middlesbrough	23	Wolves	26
Cardiff	31	Milwall	29	Wolves	27
Chelsea	08	Newcastle Utd	16	Celtic	09
Coventry City	17	Norwich City	18	Rangers	10
Derby County	28	Nottm. Forest	13		
Everton	08	QPR	25		

Sport

The Guardian

How to serve eagles and birdies à La Carte as the French get a piquant taste of golf anglais at Chouzy-sur-Loire



Vincent Hanna

GOLF is a great leveller. I remarked in the margins at the 9th hole I was thinking about the tragic Renny Ferry in the US PGA. A respectful hush fell upon

the company. Well, a hush anyway. The wine-grower from Amboise looked puzzled: "But in the Loire the terrain is flat already." Others fell to talking about bulldozers. In no time there was an argument about the economy. We all had several beers. "Maybe I shouldn't have used the word *oiseleur*," I said to Mark Foster. "French," he replied, "is a great leveller." Mark is an affable man who has spent a lifetime in steel and in France. He could have chosen to prop up the bar in Royal St George's or Chart Hills, but instead he rescued a struggling nine-hole course at Chouzy-sur-Loire.

The French have always felt uneasy about golf. The sport of the well-to-do, and the Anglo-Saxon, it was played at Paris or in the watering holes of Provence and Normandy. Somebody, probably Arthur Buchwald, once remarked that the most famous French golfer was the Duke of Windsor. As a small boy I remember trailing the players in the French Open at Deauville, among them a 19-year-old called Gary Player. Since 1988 there has been an explosion of golf construction in France, based mostly on American country clubs with expensive facilities and restaurants.

The snag is that whereas the restaurants naturally have done well, fewer than half the new golf clubs are breaking even. Only 250,000 actually play here, compared with over a million annual golfing visitors to Scotland. But each country supports about 450 courses. I wondered why the French, who excel at many individual sports — skiing, cycling, athletics — do not do well at golf. "The game is hedged about with rules and etiquette," explained Mark. "That are as much about social behaviour as sport. The French find that difficult — especially as they [the rules] were mostly

invented by the English." So a convivial group sitting at a table in the marquee at La Carte (the permanent clubhouse is being trucked from England) may see some friends arrive on the adjacent 9th tee and sometimes get up and join in. Last year my two-ball was held up by a single player fishing in the lake for his ball. "Can we play through?" I asked. "Why?" he retorted. "One can go faster than two." The Loire valley has some marvellous courses — Les Bordes, Cheverny, Ardre and Lire — which take advantage of the flat terrain and special bluish light that hangs

over the river. Closest to it is La Carte, which sits across the Loire from Chaumont and has no problems with irrigation: "You just sink a shaft 10 feet down, hit the Loire and pump away." Mark Foster left school for the City in 1968 and spent a lifetime selling steel in Europe. He is one of those unsung heroes of the export business who, because they toil away from home, are more easily discarded. So in 1994 he found himself at a loose end. "I had an interest in a vineyard near Tournon and dreamed of building a golf course round it." Jacques Pelard, who runs the

Vaucoleurs course near Paris, told him the first commercial law of golf: he who first builds a golf course loses an awful lot of money. Better be second-in-line. So he and his French wife Katia found La Carte, a nine-hole course and hotel, built in the Eighties by Hubert Wayaile, who was, in the Sixties, the Terry Wogan of France, and who now does a late-night phone-in on Europe 1. Hubert duly lost his *chemise* in the venture. Mark leased the course, bought new machinery, consulted an English greenkeeper and in two years has made it pay — "maybe be-

cause Katia and I run it ourselves". His 150 local members have just surprised the region by winning the winter league. The French are slowly taking to barbecues, golf scrambles and the convivial atmosphere of a British club. "Did you hear about the day his water-pump broke?" said my neighbour the tree surgeon. "The greens began to burn up. So Mark turns up at the *Mairie*. Next thing Chouzy's two fire engines are pumping water from the river for him." "Not only that," I said. "He persuaded his daughter to read ancient history — at St Andrews."

Rugby League

Offiah 'not keen' and not touring

Paul Fitzpatrick

THE absence of Martin Offiah, the modern game's most lethal finisher, was the major debating point when Phil Larder announced his Lions squad for the tour of Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Zealand yesterday.



Farrell... youngest captain ever for a youthful squad

Offiah, who left Wigan two weeks ago for a dual cross-code contract with London Broncos and Bedford rugby union club, had told the Great Britain coach that he had insufficient enthusiasm for the six-week tour, which opens with a midweek game in PNG on September 25.

The 25-year-old winger scored the 424th try of his nine-year league career on Sunday at Oldham and will clearly be missed — though less so than previously, with the likes of Jason Robinson, John Bentley, Joey Hayes and Anthony Sullivan stepping in. One can look back at the GB squads sent to tour Australasia in 1984 and 1988 and wonder how on earth some players ever came to be picked. That is unlikely to be the case with this 33-man party. Some reputations still have to be earned and there will no doubt be some failures, but the quality of the 13-man "shadow squad" on stand-by is evidence of the depth of talent now available to Larder. That is underlined by the class of player unable to make either squad, with the Bradford centre Matt

Calland a prime example. A youthful party will be led by the youngest captain in the game's history, Wigan's Andrew Farrell. Since Farrell made his debut against New Zealand as an 18-year-old in 1993, the 6ft 4in, 17-stone loose forward has exhausted most of the superlatives. He is to rugby league what Duncan Edwards, long ago, was to English soccer. A player of exceptional all-round gifts, he has scored 204 points for Wigan this season. Equally impressive are his maturity and discipline and he has long been marked out as a leader.

It was a good day in every way for him yesterday, the captaincy coinciding with the birth of his second daughter, Elisha, who weighed in at 8lb 3oz.

This could be a difficult tour and is clearly a taxing assignment for one so young. He will be expected to get the best from players who have far more experience than he, among them his Wigan teammate Shaun Edwards, himself a former GB captain. But Farrell will not want for respect. The most surprising selection was the London Broncos stand-off Tulson Tollett, born in Hastings of English parents but raised in Australia, who has played for Perth and Parramatta. Larder has looked overseas for two of his players, Denis Betts, the second-row from Auckland Warriors, and Lee Jackson, the Newcastle Knights hooker. He failed to persuade another Auckland forward, Andy Platt, to join. There could be trouble ahead, however, with the choices of Wigan's Jason Robinson and Gary Connolly, who have signed contracts with the Australian Rugby League. The ARL stopped Connolly playing in the World Nine event in Fiji this year and might try to force him and Robinson out again. That, said Larder, was not his concern. Choosing the best possible squad was, and that meant he also included Leslyn Harris, Warrington's £1.35 million-listed stand-off. Hayes (St Helens), David Bradbury (Oldham), Terry O'Connor (Wigan) and Brian McDermott (Bradford) are among eight men without international experience but the most interesting newcomer is Sheffield's scrapping 20-year-old centre Keith Senior. His recent display against Wigan's Vaaigala Tui-gama persuaded Larder of his huge promise.



Yesterday's number... Offiah will not be seen in a GB shirt this winter

Sailing

Munro-Kerr lost overboard in Rotterdam race

Bob Fisher

DUNCAN Munro-Kerr, a former Royal Ocean Racing Club rear-cummodore, was lost overboard and presumed drowned 27 miles off the Belgian coast yesterday morning.

He was competing in the RORC's Cowes to Rotterdam race and it is believed he was wearing neither a safety harness nor life-jacket when he went overboard off Ostend at approximately three o'clock in poor visibility.

The wind was force six to seven, 22-33 knots from the north-north-west, and the waves were highly confused.

The race was being held under the special regulations of the Offshore Racing Council, which specify what a boat must carry but do not make the wearing of harnesses or life-jackets mandatory.

Munro-Kerr, who was 43, had left Cowes in his 34ft Trocar, a relatively heavy-displacement boat built more than 20 years ago, on Sunday afternoon. Conditions were "not ultimate, the sort of weather that Trocar would do well in", said Green.

Dr Nick Greville, a former owner who was on board, made the Mayday call. A search was mounted by the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Ostend, and nine commercial ships, an ocean-going tug, two Dutch lifeboats and a search-and-rescue helicopter joined in. The search was called off eight hours after Munro-Kerr went overboard.

Mike Offian, an RORC committee member, said he was stunned by the loss. "He was one of the soundest sailors in the club." Munro-Kerr was a practising barrister, a council member of the Royal Yachting Association, and served on many yacht-racing committees. A popular man, it was an open secret that he was being groomed as a future RORC commodore. He leaves a wife and three young daughters.

Athletics

Christie has point to prove on night of rich promise

Duncan Mackay in Zurich

AS THE richest event on the Grand Prix circuit with a budget of \$6 million (£3.9 million), tonight's meeting here has attracted 28 champions — Olympic, world, and world record holders.

So high is the quality that it has been dubbed the "three-hour Olympics". And for Linford Christie it has assumed a special significance.

"This is Linford's Olympic final," said Donovan Bailey, who set a world record of 9.84sec when succeeding Christie as the Olympic 100 metres champion after the Briton was disqualified for two false starts. "I felt so sorry for him in Atlanta. Linford will feel he has a big point to prove. That will make him an even more dangerous challenge. I suspect he has a good spec performance inside him."

The important statistics here last year were not Christie's victory over Bailey or the world record set by the 3,000m runner Haile Gebrselassie of Ethiopia and the 3,000m steeplechaser Moses Kiptanui of Kenya, but the rich rewards such endeavour yielded. The meeting was the richest night in athletics history, with the promoter Res

Brigger paying out about \$8 million in appearance and bonus fees. Gebrselassie and Kiptanui received \$50,000 as an appearance fee from Brigger, who also paid a \$10,000 bonus of \$5,000. Then he had to pay another \$50,000 as a world record bonus and a \$20,000 bonus for such brilliant performances. The meeting's sponsors also put up a \$2.1b gold bar for the world record, worth another \$15,000.

A series of marks will come under attack again tonight, including Sebastian Coe's 15-year-old 800m record of 1min 41.73sec. Wilson Kipketer, the man chasing it, has plenty of incentive besides the money to go for a fast time.

He will meet Norway's Vegard Rodal, who won the Olympic title in Kipketer's absence after red tape prevented the Kenyan-born world champion representing his adopted country, Denmark, in Atlanta. "I feel I have something to prove," Kipketer said. "But no amount of victories or fast times will make up for missing the Olympics."

A world record would make up for the absence of Michael Johnson, the Olympic 200m and 400m champion, who has a hamstring injury.

The tour

GREAT BRITAIN: Backs: J Bentley, D Bentley, D Connolly, S Edwards, K Hastings, J Robinson (all Wigan), S Scudling, J Hayes, P Newbrough, S Prescott, A Siddle (all St Helens), J Harris (Warrington), K Smailes (Sheffield), T Eames (Cardiff), S Surson (Bradford), T Tollett (London), P Broadbent (Sheffield), M Cassidy, T O'Connor (both Wigan), K Connolly, G Joyce (both St Helens), S Dwyer, S McDermott, S Maclean (all Bradford), W Harrison, A Siddle (both Leeds), L Jackson (Newcastle Knights), S Mather (Leeds), R Phillips (Warrington), P Southouse (Warrington), Stand-by: A Atkinson (Oldham), S Blackley, J McAvoy (both Sale), J Oribelley, C Powell (both Rochdale), S Houghton, C

Wardrook (both Wigan), A Numbie (St Helens), J Lomas (Bradford), S Macarrie (Wigan), S Macfarlane (Leeds), J Ross (Warrington), R Stewart (Sheffield). IRISHMEN'S: Standby: P J 20 Squad departs, Wed 28 March in Papua New Guinea. Sat 28 Test v Papua New Guinea (Launceston), Sat 29 Test v New Zealand (Wellington), Sat 30 Test v Fiji (Nadi), Test 1 v Lion Test (Suva), Test 2 v Fiji (Suva), Test 3 v New Zealand (Wellington), Fri 31 First Test v New Zealand (Edison Stadium, Auckland), Test 2 v New Zealand (Whangarei), Fri 2 Second Test v New Zealand (Plymouth, New Zealand), Test 3 v New Zealand (Christchurch), Sun 3 Squad returns.

GB want only very committed tourists, says Larder

PHIL LARDER, Great Britain's coach, says the international door will be kept open for Martin Offiah, the most notable absentee from the tour squad named yesterday, writes Paul Fitzpatrick. However, there must be a fair chance that the London Broncos and Bedford winger has played his last rugby league international. Whether a Test career in union is about to unfold remains to be seen.

Offiah's presence in the squad for the autumn tour could have led to problems with Bedford, his new union club, who jointly financed the deal that lured him from Wigan. Maurice Lindsay, the Rugby League chief executive, anticipated this situation after Offiah's transfer and said the prolific winger was a Super League player and would be in contention for a tour place. The ingredients were

there for conflict. Possibly Offiah concluded he had no stomach for another wrangle, something the code has had more than its share of in the past 18 months. At any rate he cited lack of enthusiasm as his reason for not wanting to be considered for selection, although there was little evidence of fading desire when he scored a record-equaling five tries for England against France in June. "Martin is a proven try-

scorer with England and Great Britain," said Larder, who has spoken to Offiah several times in recent weeks, "and, while he still has the ability, he does not at the moment have the enthusiasm for a tour which lasts six weeks. "It is very important that everyone who is selected is not only a capable footballer but is very committed and enthusiastic, and therefore we have selected the likes of Joey Hayes."

Larder insisted, however, that this was not necessarily the international end for Offiah. "I would never close the door on any player," he said. "That is not the way I work." Another possibility now, of course, is that Offiah will pursue international recognition in union. He left Rosslyn Park for league in 1987 and has never made any secret of his disappointment at missing an England union cap. There

is no question that at 29 he is still good enough to score tries at the highest level. The World Cup last year, when without him England got to the final against Australia, proved he is no longer indispensable, but he has always been a potential match-winner for Great Britain since the first of his 33 appearances in 1988. His 26 Test tries have been bettered only by Mick Sullivan (41) and Garry Schofield (31).



Without the right help David Gower might have ended up in court.

Well, that's where David Gower was heading as a law student until somebody spotted a spark of talent. By supporting the Development of Excellence programme, NatWest is helping to identify, coach and develop today's bright young hopefuls, giving them the same chance to shine. Great news for English cricket, not so good for the opposition. **NatWest** More than just a bank. National Westminster Bank Plc.

Arsenal close in on their man, page 14
Hard graft at Maine Road, page 14

Offiah omitted by Great Britain, page 15
Yachtsman lost in Channel race, page 15

SportsGuardian

SURREY AND YORKSHIRE FAIL THEIR FINAL ENTRANCE EXAMS

NatWest Trophy, semi-finals: Surrey v Essex

Departing Law lords it for Essex

Paul Weaver at The Oval

ESSEX reached only their second final in the premier one-day competition here yesterday as they destroyed a gifted Surrey side's hopes of a triple in the twilight of a south London evening. They won by four wickets with 20 balls remaining, after a determined seventh-wicket stand of 83 between Ronnie Irani (52) — who again showed his immense character, and struck Adam Holloake through the covers for the winning boundary — and Robert Rollins (26).

SURREY	
M A Butcher run out	37
M A Stewart not out	12
N Shahid c Prichard b Williams	28
P Thorpe c Robinson b Irani	8
A D Brown c Grayson b Gooch	11
A J Hollis c Law b Grayson	4
C Lewis not out	8
Extras (lb, w, nb)	25
Total (for 8 00 overs)	278
Fall of wickets: 81, 151, 185, 193, 214.	
Did not bat: J E Benjamin, B P Julian, M P Bicknell, R M Pearson	
Bowling: Irani 17-2-59-1; Williams 12-3-42-1; Irani 8-2-33-2; Law 11-1-37-2; Such 12-0-50-0; Grayson 8-0-47-2.	
ESSEX	
G A Gooch b Lewis	50
A P Grayson bow b Bennett	12
N Hussain c Julian b Lewis	18
S G Law c Julian b Benjamin	32
P J Prichard b Julian	13
R C Trott not out	32
D J Richardson c Stewart b Julian	28
W J Rolfe not out	26
Extras (lb, w, nb)	47
Total (for 8 00 overs)	278
Fall of wickets: 10, 32, 128, 178, 207, 214.	
Did not bat: M C Hill, M Williams, P M Such	
Bowling: Richardson 12-1-53-3; Lewis 12-4-71-2; Julian 7-0-41-1; Benjamin 7-0-34-1; Holloake 8-0-32-0; Pearson 7-0-34-1.	
Umpires: B J Meyer and R Palmer	
Match won by four wickets.	

brilliant striking to see Surrey to a reasonable though never adequate total, then he threw it all away with profligate figures of two for 71 and a plethora of wides and no-balls. He bowled seven wides, two of which went for four, and six no-balls.

Surrey, the 7-4 favourites yesterday morning to win this competition, had a couple of worries when the match started. One concerned the dire one-day form of Alec Stewart over the past two months, the other the questionable fitness of Lewis, although a Lewis limp would test the finest of diagnosticians. In the event these two proved to be Surrey's major assets when they batted.

Stewart's current form proved more important than his patchy recent record in limited-overs cricket. He batted throughout the innings and with much of the fluency and with much of the fluency he had shown in the Headingley Test last weekend.

He scored an unbeaten 125, which was to win him the Man of the Match award, and although an anchor role was largely thrust upon him by the fall of wickets at the other end, he still faced only 186 balls; there were nine fours and two memorable sixes, both over long-off, against Law and Paul Grayson.

Lewis faced 29 balls for his 45, with three languidly struck sixes. Surrey's total of 278 for five always looked 20 or so runs short. But it was only an unbeaten partnership of 61 from the last 10 overs between these two batsmen which made it competitive. They resembled a 1500 metres runner who had left his devastating sprint finish a little too late.



Down and out... Surrey's Mark Butcher is left sprawling as he is run out for 27 — by the inevitable Stuart Law — at The Oval yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

brought in Nadeem Shahid, a batsman in good form but hardly as accomplished as Graham Thorpe who, even in his bustling, acquisitive way, needs time at the crease to build an innings. Shahid played well enough but his 35 occupied 18 overs, delaying Thorpe's arrival until the

44th over, and the England player was out soon afterwards, slipping as he aimed to deep extra-cover. The unveiling of the mightiest weapons in Surrey's armoury, those ground-to-air missile launchers Alistair Brown, Holloake and Lewis, was also delayed longer

than it should have been. When Essex batted, needing to score at 4.6 an over, they soon lost Grayson, lbw to Martin Bicknell, and at 32 Nasser Hussain was caught in the gully, although given the shortness and width of this delivery Lewis's celebration seemed a little excessive.

Lewis later bowled an over which must have sent his captain crackers. He started with four wides, then bowled Gooch with a beauty, was immediately struck for two fours by the new batsman Irani, and finished with another wide.

At 188 for four in the 39th over Paul Prichard, who had won the toss and decided to bowl, was presented with another difficult decision. While batting with Darren Robinson he was offered the light by the umpires. He declined, and a short time afterwards he and Robinson were out in the same over. The width of his

smile last night suggested he had forgotten all about it. Surrey's misery was complete when they learned that they faced a £4,500 fine for bowling too slowly. They were seven overs behind at the cut-off point and the fine will represent almost half their prize-money.

Lancashire v Yorkshire

Lloyd's name on Lancashire lips

David Hepps at Old Trafford

TO EXPECT another Roses semi-final to go down to the last ball proved to be too much. But if yesterday's tie looked a stirring climax, Lancashire's progress to their second Lord's final of the summer was achieved only after another contest overflowing with excitement.



Home banker... Lloyd reverse-sweeps Yorkshire's Stemp to the boundary. MICHAEL STEELE

It was the departure of Michael Bevan, their inspirational Australian, which halted Yorkshire's challenge. At times his 83 from 110 balls was a faithful pursuit of victory, at others it had become a stubborn refusal to bow to advancing failure.

While Bevan survived, Yorkshire lived and breathed, but when he clubbed Austin to Chapple at long-on, with 97 still needed off 11 overs, their task looked enormous. White's dismissal next ball — with Yates plucking a catch at short midwicket as brilliant as Gough's to dismiss Watkinson several hours earlier — proved terminal, pluckily as Blakey and Gough tried to remedy the situation.

his entire body as if determined that nothing is left to chance. If he straight drives, his right elbow is thrust brightly to the heavens. Last night he left for Australia, fearing that Yorkshire's season of promise was in ruins.

Lancashire deserved their day. Their seamers bowled more consistently, they had the edge in the field, especially in the deep, and in Graham Lloyd, son of the England coach, they possessed the outstanding batsman. Lloyd's bold strokeplay, in making 81 from 90 deliveries, liberated Lancashire's innings after they had slipped to 33 for three on a pitch that seemed for an hour and turned slowly all day.

skirmishes is now reflected in the one-day game which has produced two extraordinary matches relished by boisterous, near-capacity crowds. Memories of Yorkshire's B & H defeat had left their captain, Byas, befuddled. In the morning he twice dropped Atherton at second slip, fumbling to his right off Gough, when the opener had made only a single, and Byas was found wanting again a run later when Atherton edged Silverwood high above him.

Byas said now, but broke the speed record for gum chewing. Atherton struggled to assert himself, particularly against Gough, who had a point to prove about his England omission, and England's captain was also an innocent party in the run-out of Gallian, who ignored his shriek for a single wide off slip until he was alongside; Byas's job to the bowler's end helped to restore his own equilibrium.

After struggling to 18 in 20 overs, Atherton fell, cutting at Stemp. Fairbrother's slog to deep midwicket, second ball, smacked of irresponsibility but then Crawley and Lloyd fashioned a stand of 146 in 27 overs that edged the game out of Yorkshire's reach.

Crawley's half-century was admirably stylish, but it was Lloyd who made more impact. He announced his intentions by driving his second ball, from Stemp, down the ground, unvelled several modifications of the reverse sweep, and played forcibly against the seamers before hacking a long hop from

Aussies' bitter-sweet exit

STUART LAW and Michael Bevan left Heathrow last night to prepare in contrasting moods for Australia's tour of Sri Lanka, writes David Hepps.

Essex and Yorkshire will each insist that their Australian batsman has been the most influential overseas player in the county game this season. Law has struck 11 centuries for the NatWest finalists while Bevan's outstanding, if temperamental, contributions have driven Yorkshire's escape from three decades of under-achievement.

While Law hastened from The Oval by car for the Brisbane flight, Yorkshire were refusing to reveal the cost of the hired helicopter that carried Bevan from Manchester to Heathrow. Not even Yorkshire's stingiest fan could object. With the Australian board brooking no delays for semi-finals going into a second day, the TCCB had directed that Lancashire and Surrey would allow fielding substitutes.

Guardian Crossword No 20,731

Set by Araucaria

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,730

18 Measure of acidity I shall use around the 'cuse, heard in 14 Square (8)

19 See 3

21 Guardian's party turned up first with perfumes (6)

22 French entertainer's lost heart through neglect (6)

24 Grass to be imitating (4)

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"The trouble is that being pregnant with triplets means that people are always asking me what I think about the latest issues, wanting to know whether I've considered getting rid of one of my triplets to give the other two a better chance, or wanting to know what I'm intending to do with my frozen embryos."

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